

PAPERS

ON

LITERATURE AND ART

BY

S. MARGARET FULLER,

AUTHOR OF "A SUMMER ON THE LAKES;" "WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY," ETC. ETC.

PART I.

LONDON:

WILEY & PUTNAM, 6, WATERLOO PLACE.

1846.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

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PREFACE.

IN the original plan for publishing a selection from my essays in different kinds which have appeared in periodicals, I had aimed at more completeness of arrangement than has been attained in these two volumes. Selections had been made from essays on English literature, on Continental and American literature, and on Art. I had wished, beside, for a department in which to insert sketches of a miscellaneous character, in prose and verse.

It was proposed, in the critical pieces, to retain the extracts with which they were originally adorned, as this would give them far more harmony and interest for the general reader.

The translation, however, of the matter from a more crowded page to its present form has made such a difference, that I have been obliged to drop most of the extracts from several of the pieces. Moreover, in approaching the end of the first number, I found myself obliged to omit more than half the essays I had proposed on the subject of English literature, the greater part of those on Art, and those on Continental literature and of a miscellaneous kind entirely. I find, indeed, that the matter which I had

supposed could be comprised in two of these numbers would fill six or eight.

Had I been earlier aware of this, I should have made a different selection, and one which would do more justice to the range and variety of subjects which have been before my mind during the ten years that, in the intervals allowed me by other engagements, I have written for the public.

To those of my friends, who have often expressed a wish that I "could find time to write," it will be a satisfaction to know that, though the last twenty months is the first period in my life when it has been permitted me to make my pen my chief means of expressing my thoughts, yet I have written enough, if what is afloat, and what lies hid in manuscript, were put together, to make a little library, quite large enough to exhaust the patience of the collector, if not of the reader. Should I do no more, I have at least sent my share of paper missives through the world.

The present selection contains some of my earliest and some of my latest expressions. I have not put dates to any of the pieces, though, in the earlier, I see much crudity, which I seem to have outgrown now, just as I hope I shall think ten years hence of what I write to-day. But I find an identity in the main views and ideas, a substantial harmony among these pieces, and I think those who have been interested in my mind at all, will take some pleasure in reading the youngest and crudest of these pieces, and will readily disown for me what I would myself disown.

Should these volumes meet with a kind reception, a more

complete selection from my miscellanies will be offered to the public in due time. Should these not seem to be objects of interest I shall take the hint, and consign the rest to the peaceful seclusion of the garret.

I regret omitting some pieces explanatory of foreign authors, that would have more interest now than when those authors become, as I hope they will, familiar friends to the youth of my country. It has been one great object of my life to introduce here the works of those great geniuses, the flower and fruit of a higher state of development, which might give the young who are soon to constitute the state, a higher standard in thought and action than would be demanded of them by their own time. I have hoped that, by being thus raised above their native sphere, they would become its instructors and the faithful stewards of its best riches, not its tools or slaves. I feel with satisfaction that I have done a good deal to extend the influence of the great minds of Germany and Italy among my compatriots. Of our English contemporaries, as yet but partially known here, I have written notices of Milnes, Landor, and Julius Hare, which I regret being obliged to omit, as these writers are yet but little known. Bailey and Tennyson have now a fair chance of circulation, therefore my notices may sleep with the occasion that gave them birth. Tennyson, especially, needs no usher. He has only to be heard to command the audience of that "melodious thunder."

Of the essays in the second volume, that on American lit-

erature is the only one, which has not, before, appeared in print. It is a very imperfect sketch ; the theme was great and difficult, the time to be spared for its consideration was brief. It is, however, written with sincere and earnest feelings, and from a mind that cares for nothing but what is permanent and essential. It should, then, have some merit, if only in the power of suggestion. A year or two hence, I hope to have more to say upon this topic, or the interests it represents, and to speak with more ripeness both as to the matter and the form.

S. M. F.

New York, July, 1846.

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PAPERS ON LITERATURE AND ART.

A SHORT ESSAY ON CRITICS.

AN essay on Criticism were a serious matter ; for, though this age be emphatically critical, the writer would still find it necessary to investigate the laws of criticism as a science, to settle its conditions as an art. Essays, entitled critical, are epistles addressed to the public, through which the mind of the recluse relieves itself of its impressions. Of these the only law is, " Speak the best word that is in thee." Or they are regular articles got up to order by the literary hack writer, for the literary mart, and the only law is to make them plausible. There is not yet deliberate recognition of a standard of criticism, though we hope the always strengthening league of the republic of letters must ere long settle laws on which its Amphictyonic council may act. Meanwhile let us not venture to write on criticism, but, by classifying the critics, imply our hopes and thereby our thoughts.

First, there are the subjective class, (to make use of a convenient term, introduced by our German benefactors.) These are persons to whom writing is no sacred, no reverend employment. They are not driven to consider, not forced upon investigation by the fact, that they are deliberately giving their thoughts an independent existence, and that it may live to others when dead to them. They know no agonies of conscientious research, no timidities of self-respect. They see no ideal beyond the present hour, which makes its mood an uncertain tenure. How things

affect them now they know ; let the future, let the whole take care of itself. They state their impressions as they rise, of other men's spoken, written, or acted thoughts. They never dream of going out of themselves to seek the motive, to trace the law of another nature. They never dream that there are statures which cannot be measured from their point of view. They love, they like, or they hate ; the book is detestable, immoral, absurd, or admirable, noble, of a most approved scope ;—these statements they make with authority, as those who bear the evangel of pure taste and accurate judgment, and need be tried before no human synod. * To them it seems that their present position commands the universe.

Thus the essays on the works of others, which are called criticisms, are often, in fact, mere records of impressions. To judge of their value you must know where the man was brought up, under what influences,—his nation, his church, his family even. He himself has never attempted to estimate the value of these circumstances, and find a law or raise a standard above all circumstances, permanent against all influence. He is content to be the creature of his place, and to represent it by his spoken and written word. He takes the same ground with a savage, who does not hesitate to say of the product of a civilization on which he could not stand, "It is bad," or "It is good."

The value of such comments is merely reflex. They characterize the critic. They give an idea of certain influences on a certain act of men in a certain time or place. Their absolute, essential value is nothing. The long review, the eloquent article by the man of the nineteenth century, are of no value by themselves considered, but only as samples of their kind. The writers were content to tell what they felt, to praise or to denounce without needing to convince us or themselves. They sought not the divine truths of philosophy, and she proffers them not if unsought.

Then there are the apprehensive. These can go out of themselves and enter fully into a foreign existence. They breathe its life ; they live in its law ; they tell what it meant, and why it so expressed its meaning. They reproduce the work of which they speak, and make it better known to us in so far as two statements are better than one. There are beautiful specimens in this kind. They are pleasing to us as bearing witness of the genial sympathies of nature. They have the ready grace of love with somewhat of the dignity of disinterested friendship. They sometimes give more pleasure than the original production of which they treat, as melodies will sometimes ring sweetlier in the echo. Besides there is a peculiar pleasure in a true response ; it is the assurance of equipoise in the universe. These, if not true critics, come nearer the standard than the subjective class, and the value of their work is ideal as well as historical.

Then there are the comprehensive, who must also be apprehensive. They enter into the nature of another being and judge his work by its own law. But having done so, having ascertained his design and the degree of his success in fulfilling it, thus measuring his judgment, his energy, and skill, they do also know how to put that aim in its place, and how to estimate its relations. And this the critic can only do who perceives the analogies of the universe, and how they are regulated by an absolute, invariable principle. He can see how far that work expresses this principle, as well as how far it is excellent in its details. Sustained by a principle, such as can be girt within no rule, no formula, he can walk around the work, he can stand above it, he can uplift it, and try its weight. Finally, he is worthy to judge it.

Critics are poets cut down, says some one by way of jeer ; but, in truth, they are men with the poetical temperament to apprehend, with the philosophical tendency to investigate. The maker is divine ; the critic sees this divine, but brings it down to hu-

manity by the analytic process. The critic is the historian who records the order of creation. In vain for the maker, who knows without learning it, but not in vain for the mind of his race.

The critic is beneath the maker, but is his needed friend. What tongue could speak but to an intelligent ear, and every noble work demands its critic. The richer the work, the more severe should be its critic ; the larger its scope, the more comprehensive must be his power of scrutiny. The critic is not a base caviller, but the younger brother of genius. Next to invention is the power of interpreting invention ; next to beauty the power of appreciating beauty.

And of making others appreciate it ; for the universe is a scale of infinite gradation, and, below the very highest, every step is explanation down to the lowest. Religion, in the two modulations of poetry and music, descends through an infinity of waves to the lowest abysses of human nature. Nature is the literature and art of the divine mind ; human literature and art the criticism on that ; and they, too, find their criticism within their own sphere.

The critic, then, should be not merely a poet, not merely a philosopher, not merely an observer, but tempered of all three. If he criticise the poem, he must want nothing of what constitutes the poet, except the power of creating forms and speaking in music. He must have as good an eye and as fine a sense ; but if he had as fine an organ for expression also, he would make the poem instead of judging it. He must be inspired by the philosopher's spirit of inquiry and need of generalization, but he must not be constrained by the hard cemented masonry of method to which philosophers are prone. And he must have the organic acuteness of the observer, with a love of ideal perfection, which forbids him to be content with mere beauty of details in the work or the comment upon the work.

There are persons who maintain, that there is no legitimate

criticism, except the reproductive; that we have only to say what the work is or is to us, never what it is not. But the moment we look for a principle, we feel the need of a criterion, of a standard; and then we say what the work is *not*, as well as what it *is*; and this is as healthy though not as grateful and gracious an operation of the mind as the other. We do not seek to degrade but to classify an object by stating what it is not. We detach the part from the whole, lest it stand between us and the whole. When we have ascertained in what degree it manifests the whole, we may safely restore it to its place, and love or admire it there ever after.

The use of criticism, in periodical writing is to sift, not to stamp a work. Yet should they not be "sieves and drainers for the use of luxurious readers," but for the use of earnest inquirers, giving voice and being to their objections, as well as stimulus to their sympathies. But the critic must not be an infallible adviser to his reader. He must not tell him what books are not worth reading, or what must be thought of them when read, but what he read in them. Wo to that coterie where some critic sits despotic, intrenched behind the infallible "We." Wo to that oracle who has infused such soft sleepiness, such a gentle dulness into his atmosphere, that when he opes his lips no dog will bark. It is this attempt at dictatorship in the reviewers, and the indolent acquiescence of their readers, that has brought them into disrepute. With such fairness did they make out their statements, with such dignity did they utter their verdicts, that the poor reader grew all too submissive. He learned his lesson with such docility, that the greater part of what will be said at any public or private meeting can be foretold by any one who has read the leading periodical works for twenty years back. Scholars sneer at and would fain dispense with them altogether; and the public, grown lazy and helpless by this constant use of props and stays, can now scarce brace itself even to get through a

magazine article, but reads in the daily paper laid beside the breakfast plate a short notice of the last number of the long established and popular review, and thereupon passes its judgment and is content.

Then the partisan spirit of many of these journals has made it unsafe to rely upon them as guide-books and expurgatory indexes. They could not be content merely to stimulate and suggest thought, they have at last become powerless to supersede it.

From these causes and causes like these, the journals have lost much of their influence. There is a languid feeling about them, an inclination to suspect the justice of their verdicts, the value of their criticisms. But their golden age cannot be quite past. They afford too convenient a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge; they are too natural a feature of our time to have done all their work yet. Surely they may be redeemed from their abuses, they may be turned to their true uses. But how?

It were easy to say what they should *not* do. They should not have an object to carry or a cause to advocate, which obliges them either to reject all writings which wear the distinctive traits of individual life, or to file away what does not suit them, till the essay, made true to their design, is made false to the mind of the writer. An external consistency is thus produced, at the expense of all salient thought, all genuine emotion of life, in short, and all living influence. Their purpose may be of value, but by such means was no valuable purpose ever furthered long. There are those, who have with the best intention pursued this system of trimming and adaptation, and thought it well and best to

“Deceive their country for their country’s good.”

But their country cannot long be so governed. It misses the pure, the full tone of truth; it perceives that the voice is modulated to coax, to persuade, and it turns from the judicious man of

the world, calculating the effect to be produced by each of his smooth sentences, to some earnest voice which is uttering thoughts, crude, rash, ill-arranged it may be, but true to one human breast, and uttered in full faith, that the God of Truth will guide them aright.

And here, it seems to me, has been the greatest mistake in the conduct of these journals. A smooth monotony has been attained, an uniformity of tone, so that from the title of a journal you can infer the tenor of all its chapters. But nature is ever various, ever new, and so should be her daughters, art and literature. We do not want merely a polite response to what we thought before, but by the freshness of thought in other minds to have new thought awakened in our own. We do not want stores of information only, but to be roused to digest these into knowledge. Able and experienced men write for us, and we would know what they think, as they think it not for us but for themselves. We would live with them, rather than be taught by them how to live; we would catch the contagion of their mental activity, rather than have them direct us how to regulate our own. In books, in reviews, in the senate, in the pulpit, we wish to meet thinking men, not schoolmasters or pleaders. We wish that they should do full justice to their own view, but also that they should be frank with us, and, if now our superiors, treat us as if we might some time rise to be their equals. It is this true manliness, this firmness in his own position, and this power of appreciating the position of others, that alone can make the critic our companion and friend. We would converse with him, secure that he will tell us all his thought, and speak as man to man. But if he adapts his work to us, if he stifles what is distinctively his, if he shows himself either arrogant or mean, or, above all, if he wants faith in the healthy action of free thought, and the safety of pure motive, we will not talk with him, for we cannot confide in him. We will go to the critic who trusts Genius

and trusts us, who knows that all good writing must be spontaneous, and who will write out the bill of fare for the public as he read it for himself,—

“ Forgetting vulgar rules, with spirit free
To judge each author by his own intent,
Nor think one standard for all minds is meant.”

Such an one will not disturb us with personalities, with sectarian prejudices, or an undue vehemence in favour of petty plans or temporary objects. Neither will he disgust us by smooth obsequious flatteries and an inexpressive, lifeless gentleness. He will be free and make free from the mechanical and distorting influences we hear complained of on every side. He will teach us to love wisely what we before loved well, for he knows the difference between censoriousness and discernment, infatuation and reverence; and while delighting in the genial melodies of Pan, can perceive, should Apollo bring his lyre into audience, that there may be strains more divine than those of his native groves.

CRITICISM ON ENGLISH LITERATURE.

A DIALOGUE.

POET. CRITIC.

POET. Approach me not, man of cold, steadfast eye and compressed lips. At thy coming nature shrouds herself in dull mist; fain would she hide her sighs and smiles, her buds and fruits even in a veil of snow. For thy unkindly breath, as it pierces her mystery, destroys its creative power. The birds draw back into their nests, the sunset hues into their clouds, when you are seen in the distance with your tablets all ready to write them into prose.

CRITIC. O my brother, my benefactor, do not thus repel me. Interpret me rather to our common mother; let her not avert her eyes from a younger child. I know I can never be dear to her as thou art, yet I am her child, nor would the fated revolutions of existence be fulfilled without my aid.

POET. How meanest thou? What have thy measurements, thy artificial divisions and classifications, to do with the natural revolutions? In all real growths there is a "give and take" of unerring accuracy; in all the acts of thy life there is falsity, for all are negative. Why do you not receive and produce in your kind, like the sunbeam and the rose? Then new light would be brought out, were it but the life of a weed, to bear witness to the healthful beatings of the divine heart. But this perpetual analysis, comparison, and classification, never add one atom to the sum of existence.

CRITIC. I understand you.

POET. Yes, that is always the way. You understand me, who never have the arrogance to pretend that I understand myself.

CRITIC. Why should you?—that is my province. I am the rock which gives you back the echo. I am the tuning-key, which harmonizes your instrument, the regulator to your watch. Who would speak, if no ear heard? nay, if no mind knew what the ear heard?

POET. I do not wish to be heard in thought but in love, to be recognised in judgment but in life. I would pour forth my melodies to the rejoicing winds. I would scatter my seed to the tender earth. I do not wish to hear in prose the meaning of my melody. I do not wish to see my seed neatly put away beneath a paper label. Answer in new pœans to the soul of our souls. Wake me to sweeter childhood by a fresher growth. At present you are but an excrescence produced by my life; depart, self-conscious Egotist, I know you not.

CRITIC. Dost thou so adore Nature, and yet deny me? Is not Art the child of Nature, Civilization of Man? As Religion into Philosophy, Poetry into Criticism, Life into Science, Love into Law, so did thy lyric in natural order transmute itself into my review.

POET. Review! Science! the very etymology speaks. What is gained by looking again at what has already been seen? What by giving a technical classification to what is already assimilated with the mental life?

CRITIC. What is gained by living at all?

POET. Beauty loving itself,—Happiness!

CRITIC. Does not this involve consciousness?

POET. Yes! consciousness of Truth manifested in the individual form.

CRITIC. Since consciousness is tolerated, how will you limit it?

POET. By the instincts of my nature, which rejects yours as arrogant and superfluous.

CRITIC. And the dictate of my nature compels me to the processes which you despise, as essential to my peace. My brother (for I will not be rejected) I claim my place in the order of nature. The word descended and became flesh for two purposes, to organize itself, and to take cognizance of its organization. When the first Poet worked alone, he paused between the cantos to proclaim, "It is very good." Dividing himself among men, he made some to create, and others to proclaim the merits of what is created.

POET. Well ! if you were content with saying, "it is very good ;" but you are always crying, "it is very bad," or ignorantly prescribing how it might be better. What do you know of it ? Whatever is good could not be otherwise than it is. Why will you not take what suits you, and leave the rest ? True communion of thought is worship, not criticism. Spirit will not flow through the sluices nor endure the locks of canals.

CRITIC. There is perpetual need of protestantism in every church. If the church be catholic, yet the priest is not infallible. Like yourself, I sigh for a perfectly natural state, in which the only criticism shall be tacit rejection, even as Venus glides not into the orbit of Jupiter, nor do the fishes seek to dwell in fire. But as you soar towards this as a Maker, so do I toil towards the same aim as a Seeker. Your pinions will not upbear you towards it in steady flight. I must often stop to cut away the brambles from my path. The law of my being is on me, and the ideal standard seeking to be realized in my mind bids me demand perfection from all I see. To say how far each object answers this demand is my criticism.

POET. If one object does not satisfy you, pass on to another and say nothing.

penetrate the secret of my wishes, verify the justice of my reasonings. I must examine, compare, sift, and winnow ; what can bear this ordeal remains to me as pure gold. I cannot pass on till I know what I feel and why. An object that defies my utmost rigor of scrutiny is a new step on the stair I am making to the Olympian ~~tables~~.

POET. I think you will not know the gods when you get there, if I may judge from the cold presumption I feel in your version of the great facts of literature.

CRITIC. Statement of a part always looks like ignorance, when compared with the whole, yet may promise the whole. Consider that a part implies the whole, as the everlasting No the everlasting Yes, and permit to exist the shadow of your light, the register of your inspiration.

As he spake the word he paused, for with it his companion vanished, and left floating on the cloud a starry banner with the inscription "AFFLATUS NUMINE." The Critic unfolded one on whose flag-staff he had been leaning. Its heavy folds of pearly gray satin slowly unfolding, gave to view the word NOTITIA, and *Causarum* would have followed, when a sudden breeze from the west caught it, those heavy folds fell back round the poor man, and stifled him probably,—at least he has never since been heard of.

THE TWO HERBERTS.

THE following sketch is meant merely to mark some prominent features in the minds of the two Herberts, under a form less elaborate and more reverent than that of criticism.

A mind of penetrating and creative power could not find a better subject for a masterly picture. The two figures stand as representatives of natural religion, and of that of the Son of Man, of the life of the philosophical man of the world, and the secluded, contemplative, though beneficent existence.

The present slight effort is not made with a view to the great and dramatic results so possible to the plan. It is intended chiefly as a setting to the Latin poems of Lord Herbert, which are known to few,—a year ago, seemingly, were so to none in this part of the world. The only desire in translating them has been to do so literally, as any paraphrase, or addition of words impairs their profound meaning. It is hoped that, even in their present repulsive garb, without rhyme or rhythm, stripped, too, of the majestic Roman mantle, the greatness of the thoughts, and the large lines of spiritual experience, will attract readers, who will not find time misspent in reading them many times.

George Herbert's heavenly strain is better, though far from generally, known.

There has been no attempt really to represent these persons speaking their own dialect, or in their own individual manners. The writer loves too well to hope to imitate the sprightly, fresh, and varied style of Lord Herbert, or the quaintness and keen sweets of his brother's. Neither have accessories been given,

such as might easily have been taken from their works. But the thoughts imputed to them they might have spoken, only in better and more concise terms, and the facts—are facts. So let this be gently received with the rest of the modern tapestries. We can no longer weave them of the precious materials princes once furnished, but we can give, in our way, some notion of the original design.

It was an afternoon of one of the longest summer days. The sun had showered down his amplest bounties, the earth put on her richest garment to receive them. The clear heavens seemed to open themselves to the desire of mortals ; the day had been long enough and bright enough to satisfy an immortal.

In a green lane leading from the town of Salisbury, in England, the noble stranger was reclining beneath a tree. His eye was bent in the direction of the town, as if upon some figure approaching or receding ; but its inward turned expression showed that he was, in fact, no longer looking, but lost in thought.

“Happiness!” thus said his musing mind, “it would seem at such hours and in such places as if it not merely hovered over the earth, a poetic presence to animate our pulses and give us courage for what must be, but sometimes alighted. Such fulness of expression pervades these fields, these trees, that it excites, not rapture, but a blissful sense of peace. Yet, even were this permanent in the secluded lot, would I accept it in exchange for the bitter sweet of a wider, freer life ? I could not if I would ; yet, methinks, I would not if I could. But here comes George, I will argue the point with him.”

He rose from his seat and went forward to meet his brother, who at this moment entered the lane.

The two forms were faithful expressions of their several lives. There was a family likeness between them, for they shared in that beauty of the noble English blood, of which, in these days,

few types remain : the Norman tempered by the Saxon, the fire of conquest by integrity, and a self-contained, inflexible habit of mind. In the times of the Sydneys and Russells, the English body was a strong and nobly-proportioned vase, in which shone a steady and powerful, if not brilliant light.

The chains of convention, an external life grown out of proportion with that of the heart and mind, have destroyed, for the most part, this dignified beauty. There is no longer, in fact, an aristocracy in England, because the saplings are too puny to represent the old oak. But that it once existed, and did stand for what is best in that nation, any collection of portraits from the sixteenth century will show.

The two men who now met had character enough to exhibit in their persons not only the stock from which they sprang, but what was special in themselves harmonized with it. There were ten years betwixt them, but the younger verged on middle age ; and permanent habits, as well as tendencies of character, were stamped upon their persons.

Lord Edward Herbert was one of the handsomest men of his day, of a beauty alike stately, chivalric and intellectual. His person and features were cultivated by all the disciplines of a time when courtly graces were not insignificant, because a monarch mind informed the court, nor warlike customs, rude or mechanical, for individual nature had free play in the field, except as restrained by the laws of courtesy and honor. The steel glove became his hand, and the spur his heel ; neither can we fancy him out of his place, for any place he would have made his own. But all this grace and dignity of the man of the world was in him subordinated to that of the man, for in his eye, and in the brooding sense of all his countenance, was felt the life of one who, while he deemed that his present honour lay in playing well the part assigned him by destiny, never forgot that it was

but a part, and fed steadily his forces on that within that passes show.

It has been said, with a deep wisdom, that the figure we most need to see before us now is not that of a saint, martyr, sage, poet, artist, preacher, or any other whose vocation leads to a seclusion and partial use of faculty, but "a spiritual man of the world," able to comprehend all things, exclusively dedicate to none. Of this idea we need a new expression, peculiarly adapted to our time; but in the past it will be difficult to find one more adequate than the life and person of Lord Herbert.

George Herbert, like his elder brother, was tall, erect, and with the noble air of one sprung from a race whose spirit has never been broken or bartered; but his thin form contrasted with the full development which generous living, various exercise, and habits of enjoyment had given his brother. Nor had his features that range and depth of expression which tell of many-coloured experiences, and passions undergone or vanquished. The depth, for there was depth, was of feeling rather than experience. A penetrating sweetness beamed from him on the observer, who was rather raised and softened in himself than drawn to think of the being who infused this heavenly fire into his veins. Like the violet, the strong and subtle odour of his mind was arrayed at its source with such an air of meekness, that the receiver blessed rather the liberal winds of heaven than any earth-born flower for the gift.

Raphael has lifted the transfigured Saviour only a little way from the ground; but in the forms and expression of the feet, you see that, though they may walk there again, they would tread far more naturally a more delicate element. This buoyant lightness, which, by seeking, seems to tread the air, is indicated by the text: "Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who come with glad tidings." And such thoughts were

as he approached you. Through the faces of most men, even of geniuses, the soul shines as through a mask, or, at best, a crystal; we look behind a shield for the heart. But, with those of seraphic nature, or so filled with spirit that translation may be near, it seems to hover before or around, announcing or enfolding them like a luminous atmosphere. Such an one advances like a vision, and the eye must steady itself before a spiritual light, to recognize him as a reality.

Some such emotion was felt by Lord Herbert as he looked on his brother, who, for a moment or two, approached without observing him, but absorbed and radiant in his own happy thoughts. They had not met for long, and it seemed that George had grown from an uncertain boy, often blushing and shrinking either from himself or others, into an angelic clearness, such as the noble seeker had not elsewhere found.

But when he was seen, the embrace was eager and affectionate as that of the brother and the child.

“Let us not return at once,” said Lord Herbert. “I had already waited for you long, and have seen all the beauties of the parsonage and church.”

“Not many, I think, in the eyes of such a critic,” said George, as they seated themselves in the spot his brother had before chosen for the extent and loveliness of prospect.

“Enough to make me envious of you, if I had not early seen enough to be envious of none. Indeed, I know not if such a feeling can gain admittance to your little paradise, for I never heard such love and reverence expressed as by your people for you.”

George looked upon his brother with a pleased and open sweetness. Lord Herbert continued, with a little hesitation—“To tell the truth, I wondered a little at the boundless affection they declared. Our mother has long and often told me of your pure and beneficent life, and I know what you have done for this place

and people, but, as I remember, you were of a choleric temper."

"And am so still!"

"Well, and do you not sometimes, by flashes of that, lose all you may have gained?"

"It does not often now," he replied, "find open way. My Master has been very good to me in suggestions of restraining prayer, which come into my mind at the hour of temptation."

Lord H.—Why do you not say, rather, that your own discerning mind and maturer will show you more and more the folly and wrong of such outbreaks.

George H.—Because that would not be saying all that I think. At such times I feel a higher power interposed, as much as I see that yonder tree is distinct from myself. Shall I repeat to you some poor verses in which I have told, by means of various likenesses, in an imperfect fashion, how it is with 'me in this matter?

Lord H.—Do so! I shall hear them gladly; for I, like you, though with less time and learning to perfect it, love the deliberate composition of the closet, and believe we can better understand one another by thoughts expressed so, than in the more glowing but hasty words of the moment.

George H.—

Prayer—the church's banquet; angel's age;
God's breath in man returning to his birth;
The soul in paraphrase; heart in pilgrimage;
The Christian plummet, sounding heaven and earth.

Engine against th' Almighty; sinner's tower;
Reversed thunder; Christ's side-piercing spear;
The six-days' world transposing in an hour;
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear.

Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss;
Exalted manna: gladness of the best:

Heaven in ordinary; man well drest;
 The milky way; the bird of paradise;
 Church bells beyond the stars heard; the soul's blood;
 The land of spices; something understood.

Lord H.—(who has listened attentively, after a moment's thought.)—There is something in the spirit of your lines which pleases me, and, in general, I know not that I should differ; yet you have expressed yourself nearest to mine own knowledge and feeling, where you have left more room to consider our prayers as aspirations, rather than the gifts of grace; as—

“ Heart in pilgrimage; ”
 “ A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear.”
 “ Something understood.”

In your likenesses, you sometimes appear to quibble in a way unworthy the subject.

George H.—It is the nature of some minds, brother, to play with what they love best. Yours is of a grander and severer cast; it can only grasp and survey steadily what interests it. My walk is different, and I have always admired you in yours without expecting to keep pace with you.

Lord H.—I hear your sweet words with the more pleasure, George, that I had supposed you were now too much of the churchman to value the fruits of my thought.

George H.—God forbid that I should ever cease to reverence the mind that was, to my own, so truly that of an elder brother! I do lament that you will not accept the banner of my Master, and drink at what I have found the fountain of pure wisdom. But as I would not blot from the book of life the prophets and priests that came before Him, nor those antique sages who knew all

That Reason hath from Nature borrowed,
 Or of itself, like a good housewife spun,
 In laws and policy: what the stars conspire:

What willing Nature speaks ; what, freed by fire :
 Both th' old discoveries, and the new found seas :
 The stock and surplus, cause and history,—

As I cannot resign and disparage these, because they have not what I conceive to be the pearl of all knowledge, how could I you ?

Lord H.—You speak wisely, George, and, let me add, religiously. Were all churchmen as tolerant, I had never assailed the basis of their belief. Did they not insist and urge upon us their way as the one only way, not for them alone, but for all, none would wish to put stumbling-blocks before their feet.

George H.—Nay, my brother, do not misunderstand me. None, more than I, can think there is but one way to arrive finally at truth.

Lord H.—I do not misunderstand you ; but, feeling that you are one who accept what you do from love of the best, and not from fear of the worst, I am as much inclined to tolerate your conclusions as you to tolerate mine.

George H.—I do not consider yours as conclusions, but only as steps to such. The progress of the mind should be from natural to revealed religion, as there must be a sky for the sun to give light through its expanse.

Lord H.—The sky is—nothing !

George H.—Except room for a sun, and such there is in you. Of your own need of such, did you not give convincing proof, when you prayed for a revelation to direct whether you should publish a book against revelation ?*

* The following narration, published by Lord Herbert, in his life, has often been made use of by his opponents. It should be respected as an evidence of his integrity, being, like the rest of his memoir, a specimen of absolute truth and frankness towards himself and all other beings :—

Having many conscientious doubts whether or no to publish his book, *De Veritate*, (which was against revealed religion, on the ground that it was improbable that Heaven should deal partially with men, revealing its will to one

Lord H.—You borrow that objection from the crowd, George; but I wonder you have not looked into the matter more deeply. Is there any thing inconsistent with disbelief in a partial plan of salvation for the nations, which, by its necessarily limited working, excludes the majority of men up to our day, with belief that each individual soul, wherever born, however nurtured, may receive immediate response, in an earnest hour, from the source of truth.

George H.—But you believed the customary order of nature to be deranged in your behalf. What miraculous record does more?

Lord H.—It was at the expense of none other. A spirit asked, a spirit answered, and its voice was thunder; but, in this, there was nothing special, nothing partial wrought in my behalf, more than if I had arrived at the same conclusion by a process of reasoning.

George H.—I cannot but think, that if your mind were all race and nation, not to another,) “ Being thus doubtful in my chamber, one fair day in the summer, my easement being opened to the south, the sun shining clear and no wind stirring, I took my book, *De Veritate*, in my hand, and kneeling on my knees, devoutly said these words:—O, thou eternal God, author of the light which now shines upon me, and giver of all inward illuminations, I do beseech thee, of thy infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make. I am not satisfied enough whether I shall publish this book, *De Veritate*. If it be for thy glory, I beseech thee give me some sign from heaven; if not, I shall suppress it.—I had no sooner spoken these words, but a loud, though yet gentle noise came from the heavens, (for it was like nothing on earth,) which did so comfort and cheer me, that I took my petition as granted, and that I had the sign I demanded, whereupon, also, I resolved to print my book. This, how strange soever it may seem, I protest before the Eternal God, is true; neither am I any way superstitiously deceived herein, since I did not only clearly hear the noise, but in the serenest sky that ever I saw, being without all cloud, did, to my thinking, see the place from whence it came.”

Lord Orford observes, with his natural sneer, “ How could a man who

lowed, by the nature of your life, its free force to search, it would survey the subject in a different way, and draw inferences more legitimate from a comparison of its own experience with the gospel.

Lord H.—My brother does not think the mind is free to act in courts and camps. To me it seems that the mind takes its own course everywhere, and that, if men cannot have outward, they can always mental seclusion. None is so profoundly lonely, none so in need of constant self-support, as he who, living in the crowd, thinks an inch aside from, or in advance of it. The hermitage of such an one is still and cold ; its silence unbroken to a degree of which these beautiful and fragrant solitudes give no hint. These sunny sights and sounds, promoting reverie rather than thought, are scarce more favourable to a great advance in the intellect, than the distractions of the busy street. Beside, we need the assaults of other minds to quicken our powers, so easily hushed to sleep, and call it peace. The mind takes a bias too easily, and does not examine whether from tradition or a native growth intended by the heavens.

George H.—But you are no common man. You shine, you charm, you win, and the world presses too eagerly on you to leave many hours for meditation.

Lord H.—It is a common error to believe that the most prosperous men love the world best. It may be hardest for them to leave it, because they have been made effeminate and slothful by want of that exercise which difficulty brings. But this is not the case with me ; for, while the common boons of life's game have been too easily attained, to hold high value in my eyes, the goal which my secret mind, from earliest infancy, prescribed, has been high enough to task all my energies. Every year has helped to make that, and that alone, of value in my eyes ; and did I believe that life, in scenes like this, would lead me to it more speedily than in my accustomed broader way, I would seek it

to-morrow—nay, to-day. But is it worthy of a man to make him a cell, in which alone he can worship? Give me rather the always open temple of the universe! To me, it seems that the only course for a man is that pointed out by birth and fortune. Let him take that and pursue it with clear eyes and head erect, secure that it must point at last to those truths which are central to us, wherever we stand; and if my road, leading through the busy crowd of men, amid the clang and bustle of conflicting interests and passions, detain me longer than would the still path through the groves, the chosen haunt of contemplation, yet I incline to think that progress so, though slower, is surer. Owing no safety, no clearness to my position, but so far as it is attained to mine own effort, encountering what temptations, doubts and lures may beset a man, what I do possess is more surely mine, and less a prey to contingencies. It is a well-tempered wine that has been carried over many seas, and escaped many shipwrecks.

George H.—I can the less gainsay you, my lord and brother, that your course would have been mine could I have chosen.

Lord H.—Yes; I remember thy verse:—

Whereas my birth and spirits rather took
The way that takes the town;
Thou didst betray me to a lingering book,
And wrap me in a gown.

It was not my fault, George, that it so chanced.

George H.—I have long learnt to feel that it noway chanced; that thus, and no other, was it well for me. But how I view these matters you are, or may be well aware, through a little book I have writ. Of you I would fain learn more than can be shown me by the display of your skill in controversy in your printed works, or the rumors of your feats at arms, or success with the circles of fair ladies, which reach even this quiet nook. Rather let us, in this hour of intimate converse, such as we have

not had for years, and may not have again, draw near in what is nearest ; and do you, my dear Lord, vouchsafe your friend and brother some clear tokens as to that goal you say has from childhood been mentally prescribed you, and the way you have taken to gain it.

Lord H.—I will do this willingly, and the rather that I have with me a leaf, in which I have lately recorded what appeared to me in glimpse or flash in my young years, and now shines upon my life with steady ray. I brought it, with some thought that I might impart it to you, which confidence I have not shown to any yet ; though if, as I purpose, some memoir of my life and times should fall from my pen, these poems may be interwoven there as cause and comment for all I felt, and knew, and was. The first contains my thought of the beginning and progress of life :—

• (*From the Latin of Lord Herbert.*)

LIFE.

First, the life stirred within the genial seed,
Seeking its properties, whence plastic power
Was born. Chaos, with lively juice pervading,
External form in its recess restraining,
While the conspiring causes might accede,
And full creation safely be essayed.

Next, movement was in the maternal field ;
Fermenting spirit puts on tender limbs,
And, earnest, now prepares, of wondrous fabric,
The powers of sense, a dwelling not too mean for mind contriving
That, sliding from its heaven, it may put on
These faculties, and, prophesying future fate,
Correct the slothful weight (of matter,) nor uselessly be manifested.

A third stage, now, scene truly great contains
The solemn feast of heaven, the theatre of earth,
Kindred and species, varied forms of things

Are here discerned,—and, from its own impulse,
It is permitted to the soul to circle,
Hither and thither rove, that it may see
Laws and eternal covenants of its world,
And stars returning in assiduous course,
The causes and the bonds of life to learn,
And from afar foresee the highest will.
How he to admirable harmony
Tempers the various motions of the world,
And Father, Lord, Guardian, and Builder-up,
And Deity on every side is styled.
Next, from this knowledge the fourth stage proceeds:
Cleansing away its stains, mind daily grows more pure,
Enriched with various learning, strong in virtue,
Extends its powers, and breathes sublimer air:
A secret spur is felt within the inmost heart,
That he who will, may emerge from this perishable state,
And a happier is sought
By ambitious rites, consecrations, religious worship,
And a new hope succeeds, conscious of a better fate,
Clinging to things above, expanding through all the heavens,
And the Divine descends to meet a holy love,
And unequivocal token is given of celestial life.
That, as a good servant, I shall receive my reward;
Or, if worthy, enter as a son, into the goods of my father,
God himself is my surety. When I shall put off this life,
Confident in a better, free in my own will,
He himself is my surety, that a fifth, yet higher state shall ensue,
And a sixth, and all, in fine, that my heart shall know, how to ask.

CONJECTURES CONCERNING THE HEAVENLY LIFE.

Purified in my whole genius, I congratulate myself
Secure of fate, while neither am I downcast by any terrors,
Nor store up secret griefs in my heart,
But pass my days cheerfully in the midst of mishaps,
Despite the evils which engird the earth,
Seeking the way above the stars with ardent virtue.
I have received, beforehand, the first fruits of heavenly life—

I now seek the later, sustained by divine love,
Through which, conquering at once the scoffs of a gloomy destiny,
I leave the barbarous company of a frantic age,
Breathing out for the last time the infernal air—breathing in the supernal,
I enfold myself wholly in these sacred flames,
And, sustained by them, ascend the highest dome,
And far and wide survey the wonders of a new sphere,
And see well-known spirits, now beautiful in their proper light,
And the choirs of the higher powers, and blessed beings
With whom I desire to mingle fires and sacred bonds—
Passing from joy to joy the heaven of all,
What has been given to ourselves, or sanctioned by a common vow.
God, in the meantime, accumulating his rewards,
May at once increase our honour and illustrate his own love.
Nor heavens shall be wanting to heavens, nor numberless ages to life,
Nor new joys to these ages, such as an
Eternity shall not diminish, nor the infinite bring to an end.
Nor, more than all, shall the fair favour of the Divine be wanting—
Constantly increasing these joys, varied in admirable modes,
And making each state yield only to one yet happier,
And what we never even knew how to hope, is given to us—
Nor is aught kept back except what only the One can conceive,
And what in their own nature are by far most perfect
In us, at least, appear embellished,
Since the sleeping minds which heaven prepares from the beginning—
Only our labor and industry can vivify,
Polishing them with learning and with morals,
That they may return all fair, bearing back a dowry to heaven,
When, by use of our free will, we put to rout those ills
Which heaven has neither dispelled, nor will hereafter dispel.
Thus through us is magnified the glory of God,
And our glory, too, shall resound throughout the heavens,
And what are the due rewards of virtue, finally
Must render the Father himself more happy than his wont.
Whence still more ample grace shall be showered upon us,
Each and all yielding to our prayer,
For, if *liberty* be dear, it is permitted
To roam through the loveliest regions obvious to innumerable heavens,
And gather, as we pass, the delights of each,

If *fixed contemplation* be chosen rather in the mind,
All the mysteries of the high regions shall be laid open to us,
And the joy will be to know the methods of God,—
Then it may be permitted to act upon earth, to have a care
Of the weal of men, and to bestow just laws.
If we are more delighted with celestial *love*,
We are dissolved into flames which glide about and excite one another
Mutually, embraced in sacred ardours,
Spring upwards, enfolded together in firmest bonds,
In parts and wholes, mingling by turns,
And the ardour of the Divine kindles (in them) still new ardours,
It will make us happy to praise God, while he commands us,
The angelic choir, singing together with sweet modulation,
Sounds through heaven, publishing our joys,
And beauteous spectacles are put forth, hour by hour.
And, as it were, the whole fabric of heaven becomes a theatre,
Till the divine energy pervades the whole sweep of the world,
And chisels out from it new forms,
Adorned with new faculties, of larger powers.
Our forms, too, may then be renewed—
Assume new forms and senses, till our
Joys again rise up consummate.
If trusting thus, I shall have put off this mortal weed,
Why may not then still greater things be disclosed ?

George H.—(who, during his brother's reading, has listened, with head bowed down, leaned on his arm, looks up after a few moments' silence)—Pardon, my lord, if I have not fit words to answer you. The flood of your thought has swept over me like music, and like that, for the time, at least, it fills and satisfies. I am conscious of many feelings which are not touched upon there,—of the depths of love and sorrow made known to men, through One whom you as yet know not. But of these I will not speak now, except to ask, borne on this strong pinion, have you never faltered till you felt the need of a friend ? strong in this clear vision, have you never sighed for a more homefelt assurance to your faith ? steady in your demand of what the soul re-

quires, have you never known fear lest you want purity to receive the boon if granted ?

Lord H.—I do not count those weak moments, George ; they are not my true life.

George H.—It suffices that you know them, for, in time, I doubt not that every conviction which a human being needs, to be reconciled to the Parent of all, will be granted to a nature so ample, so open, and so aspiring. Let me answer in a strain which bespeaks my heart as truly, if not as nobly as yours answers to your great mind,—

My joy, my life, my crown !
My heart was meaning all the day
Somewhat it fain would say ;
And still it runneth, muttering, up and down,
With only this—*my joy, my life, my crown.*

Yet slight not these few words ;
If truly said, they may take part
Among the best in art.
The fineness which a hymn or psalm affords,
Is, when the soul unto the lines accords.

He who craves all the mind
And all the soul, and strength and time ;
If the words only rhyme,
Justly complains, that somewhat is behind
To make his verse or write a hymn in kind.

Whereas, if the heart be moved,
Although the verse be somewhat scant,
God doth supply the want—
As when the heart says, sighing to be approved,
“ Oh, could I love ! ” and stops ; God writeth, *loved.*

Lord H.—I cannot say to you truly that my mind replies to this, although I discern a beauty in it. You will say I lack humility to understand yours.

George H.—I will say nothing, but leave you to time and the care of a greater than I. We have exchanged our verse, let us now change our subject too, and walk homeward; for I trust you, this night, intend to make my roof happy in your presence, and the sun is sinking.

Lord H.—Yes, you know I am there to be introduced to my new sister, whom I hope to love, and win from her a sisterly regard in turn.

George H.—You, none can fail to regard; and for her, even as you love me, you must her, for we are one.

Lord H.—(smiling)—Indeed; two years wed, and say that.

George H.—Will your lordship doubt it? From your muse I took my first lesson.

* * * * *

With a look, it seem'd denied
All earthly powers but hers, yet so
As if to her breath he did owe
This borrow'd life, he thus replied—

And shall our love, so far beyond
That low and dying appetite,
And which so chaste desires unite,
Not hold in an eternal bond?

O no, belov'd! I am most sure
Those virtuous habits we acquire,
As being with the soul entire,
Must with it evermore endure.

Else should our souls in vain elect;
And vainer yet were heaven's laws
When to an everlasting cause
They gave a perishing effect.

Lord H.—(sighing)—You recall a happy season, when my thoughts were as delicate of hue, and of as heavenly a perfume as the flowers of May.

George H.—Have those flowers borne no fruit?

Lord H.—My experience of the world and men had made me believe that they did not indeed bloom in vain, but that the fruit would be ripened in some future sphere of our existence. What my own marriage was, you know,—a family arrangement made for me in my childhood. Such obligations as such a marriage could imply, I have fulfilled, and it has not failed to bring me some benefits of good-will and esteem, and far more, in the happiness of being a parent. But my observation of the ties formed, by those whose choice was left free, has not taught me that a higher happiness than mine was the destined portion of men. They are too immature to form permanent relations; all that they do seems experiment, and mostly fails for the present. Thus I had postponed all hopes except of fleeting joys or ideal pictures. Will you tell me that you are possessed already of so much more?

George H.—I am indeed united in a bond, whose reality I cannot doubt, with one whose thoughts, affections, and objects every way correspond with mine, and in whose life I see a purpose so pure that, if we are ever separated, the fault must be mine. I believe God, in his exceeding grace, gave us to one another, for we met almost at a glance, without doubt before, jar or repentance after, the vow which bound our lives together.

Lord H.—Then there is indeed one circumstance of your lot I could wish to share with you. (After some moments' silence on both sides)—They told me at the house, that, with all your engagements, you go twice a-week to Salisbury. How is that? How can you leave your business and your happy home, so much and often?

George H.—I go to hear the music; the great solemn church music. This is, at once, the luxury and the necessity of my life. I know not how it is with others, but, with me, there is a frequent drooping of the wings, a smouldering of the inward fires, a lan-

guor, almost a loathing of corporeal existence. Of this visible diurnal sphere I am, by turns, the master, the interpreter, and the victim; an ever burning lamp, to warm again the embers of the altar; a skiff, that cannot be becalmed, to bear me again on the ocean of hope; an elixir, that fills the dullest fibre with ethereal energy; such, music is to me. It stands in relation to speech, even to the speech of poets, as the angelic choir, who, in their subtler being, may inform the space around us, unseen but felt, do to men, even to prophetic men. It answers to the soul's presage, and, in its fluent life, embodies all I yet know how to desire. As all the thoughts and hopes of human souls are blended by the organ to a stream of prayer and praise, I tune at it my separate breast, and return to my little home, cheered and ready for my day's work, as the lark does to her nest after her morning visit to the sun.

Lord H.—The ancients held that the spheres made music to those who had risen into a state which enabled them to hear it. Pythagoras, who prepared different kinds of melody to guide and expand the differing natures of his pupils, needed himself to hear none on instruments made by human art, for the universal harmony which comprehends all these was audible to him. Man feels in all his higher moments, the need of traversing a subtler element, of a winged existence. Artists have recognised wings as the symbol of the state next above ours; but they have not been able so to attach them to the forms of gods and angels as to make them agree with the anatomy of the human frame. Perhaps music gives this instruction, and supplies the deficiency. Although I see that I do not feel it as habitually or as profoundly as you do, I have experienced such impressions from it.

George H.—That is truly what I mean. It introduces me into that winged nature, and not as by way of supplement, but of inevitable transition. All that has budded in me, bursts into bloom, under this influence. As I sit in our noble cathedral, in itself

one of the holiest thoughts ever embodied by the power of man, the great tides of song come rushing through its aisles ; they pervade all the space, and my soul within it, perfuming me like incense, bearing me on like the wind, and on and on to regions of unutterable joy, and freedom, and certainty. As their triumph rises, I rise with them, and learn to comprehend by living them, till at last a calm rapture seizes me, and holds me poised. The same life you have attained in your description of the celestial choirs. It is the music of the soul, when centred in the will of God, thrilled by the love, expanded by the energy, with which it is fulfilled through all the ranges of active life. From such hours, I return through these green lanes, to hear the same tones from the slightest flower, to long for a life of purity and praise, such as is manifested by the flowers.

At this moment they reached the door, and there paused to look back. George Herbert bent upon the scene a half-abstracted look, yet which had a celestial tearfulness in it, a pensiveness beyond joy. His brother looked on *him*, and, beneath that fading twilight, it seemed to him a farewell look. It was so. Soon George Herbert soared into the purer state, for which his soul had long been ready, though not impatient.

The brothers met no more ; but they had enjoyed together one hour of true friendship, when mind drew near to mind by the light of faith, and heart mingled with heart in the atmosphere of Divine love. It was a great boon to be granted two mortals.

THE PROSE WORKS OF MILTON.

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION, BY R. W. GRISWOLD.

THE noble lines of Wordsworth, quoted by Mr. Griswold on his title-page, would be the best and a sufficient advertisement of each reprint:

"Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour.

Return to us again,

And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the Sea:

Pure as the naked Heavens, majestic, free:

So didst thou travel on life's common way

In cheerful Godliness, and yet thy heart

The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

One should have climbed to as high a point as Wordsworth to be able to review Milton, or even to view in part his high places. From the hill-top we still strain our eyes looking up to the mountain-peak—

"Itself Earth's Rosy Star."

We rejoice to see that there is again a call for an edition of Milton's Prose Works. There could not be a surer sign that there is still pure blood in the nation than a call for these. The print and paper are tolerably good; if not worthy of the matter, yet they are, we suppose, as good as can be afforded and make the book cheap enough for general circulation. We wish there

had been three volumes, instead of two clumsy ones, with that detestably narrow inner margin of which we have heretofore complained. But we trust the work is in such a shape that it will lie on the table of all poor students who are ever to be scholars, and be the good angel, the Ithuriel warner of many a youth at the parting of the ways. Who chooses that way which the feet of Milton never forsook, will find in him a never failing authority for the indissoluble union between permanent strength and purity. May many, born and bred amid the corruptions of a false world till the heart is on the verge of a desolate scepticism and the good genius preparing to fly, be led to recall him and make him at home forever by such passages as we have read this beautiful bright September morning, in the 'Apology for Smectymnuus.' We chanced happily upon them, as we were pondering some sad narrations of daily life, and others who need the same consolation, will no doubt detect them in a short intercourse with the volumes.

Mr. Griswold thus closes his "Biographical Introduction:"—

"On Sunday, the eighth day of November, 1674, one month before completing his sixty-sixth year, JOHN MILTON died. He was the greatest of all human beings: the noblest and the ennobler of mankind. He has steadily grown in the world's reverence, and his fame will still increase with the lapse of ages."

The absolute of this superlative pleases us, even if we do believe that there are four or five names on the scroll of history which may be placed beside that of Milton. We love hero-worship, where the hero is, indeed, worthy the honors of a demi-god. And, if Milton be not absolutely the greatest of human beings, it is hard to name one who combines so many features of God's own image, ideal grandeur, a life of spotless virtue, heroic endeavour and constancy, with such richness of gifts.

We cannot speak worthily of the books before us. They have been, as they will be, our friends and teachers, but to express

with any justice what they are to us, or our idea of what they are to the world at large—to make any estimate of the vast fund of pure gold they contain and allow for the residuum of local and partial judgment and human frailty—to examine the bearings of various essays on the past and present with even that degree of thought and justice of which we are capable, would be a work of months. It would be to us a careful, a solemn, a sacred task, and not in anywise to be undertaken in the columns of a daily paper. Beside, who can think of Milton without the feeling which he himself expresses?—

“He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.”

We shall, then, content ourselves with stating three reasons which at this moment occur to us why these Essays of Milton deserve to be sought and studied beyond any other volumes of English prose:

1st. He draws us to a central point whither converge the rays of sacred and profane, ancient and modern Literature. Those who sit at his feet obtain every hour glimpses in all directions. The constant perception of principles, richness in illustrations and fullness of knowledge, make him the greatest Master we have in the way of giving clues and impulses. His plan tempts even very timid students to hope they may thread the mighty maze of the Past. This fullness of knowledge only a genius masculine and divine like his could animate. He says, in a letter to Diodati, written as late as his thirtieth year: “It is well known, and you well know, that I am naturally slow in writing and adverse to write.” Indeed his passion for acquisition preceded long and far outwent, in the first part of his prime, the need of creation or expression, and, probably, no era less grand and fervent than his

own could have made him still more the genius than the scholar. But he was fortunate in an epoch fitted to develop him to his full stature—an epoch rich alike in thought, action and passion, in great results and still greater beginnings. There was fire enough to bring the immense materials he had collected into a state of fusion. Still his original bias infects the pupil, and this Master makes us thirst for Learning no less than for Life.

2d. He affords the highest exercise at once to the poetic and reflective faculties. Before us move sublime presences, the types of whole regions of creation: God, man, and elementary spirits in multitudinous glory are present to our consciousness. But meanwhile every detail is grasped and examined, and strong daily interests mark out for us a wide and plain path on the earth—a wide and plain path, but one in which it requires the most varied and strenuous application of our energies to follow the rapid and vigorous course of our guide. No one can read the Essays without feeling that the glow which follows is not mere nervous exaltation, no result of electricity from another mind under which he could remain passive, but a thorough and wholesome animation of his own powers. We seek to know, to act, and to be what is possible to Man.

3d. Mr. Griswold justly and wisely observes:—"Milton is more emphatically *American* than any author who has lived in the United States." He is so because in him is expressed so much of the primitive vitality of that thought from which America is born, though at present disposed to forswear her lineage in so many ways. He is the purity of Puritanism. He understood the nature of liberty, of justice—what is required for the unimpeded action of conscience—what constitutes true marriage, and the scope of a manly education. He is one of the Fathers of this Age, of that new Idea which agitates the sleep of Europe, and of which America, if awake to the design of Heaven and her own

duty, would become the principal exponent. But the Father is still far beyond the understanding of his child.

His ideas of marriage, as expressed in the treatises on Divorce, are high and pure. He aims at a marriage of souls. If he incline too much to the prerogative of his own sex, it was from that manliness, almost the same with boorishness, that is evident in men of the greatest and richest natures, who have never known the refining influence of happy, mutual love, as the best women evince narrowness and poverty under the same privation. In every line we see how much Milton required the benefit of "the thousand decencies that daily flow" from such a relation, and how greatly he would have been the gainer by it, both as man and as genius. In his mind lay originally the fairest ideal of woman; to see it realized would have "finished his education." *His* commonwealth could only have grown from the perfecting of individual men. The private means to such an end he rather hints than states in the short essay to Education. They are such as we are gradually learning to prize. Healthful diet, varied bodily exercises, to which we no longer need give the martial aim he proposed, fit the mind for studies which are by him arranged in a large, plastic and natural method.

Among the prophetic features of his system we may mention the place given to Agriculture and Music:

"The next step would be to the authors on agriculture—Cato, Varro and Columella—for the matter is most easy; and if the language be difficult so much the better; it is not a difficulty above their years. And here will be an occasion of inciting, and enabling them hereafter to improve the tillage of their country, to recover their bad soil, and to remedy the waste that is made of good; for this was one of Hercules' praises."

How wise, too, his directions as to interspersing the study with travel and personal observation of important objects. We must have methods of our own, but the hints we might borrow from this short essay of Milton's are endless.

Then of music—

"The interim may, both with profit and delight, be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music heard or learned; either whilst the skillful organist plies his grave and fancied descant in lofty fugues, or the whole symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace the well-studied chords of some choice composer; sometimes the lute or soft organ-stop waiting on elegant voices, either to religious, martial, or civil ditties; which, if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over disposition and manners to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions."

He does not mention here the higher offices of music, but that they had been fulfilled to him is evident in the whole texture of his mind and his page. The organ was his instrument, and there is not a strain of its peculiar music that may not somewhere be traced in his verse or prose. Here, too, he was prophetic of our age, of which Music is the great and growing art, making deeper revelations than any other mode of expression now adopted by the soul.

After these scanty remarks upon the glories of this sun-like mind, let us look for a moment on the clouds which hung about its earthly course. Let us take some hints from his letters:—

"It is often a subject of sorrowful reflection to me, that those with whom I have been either fortuitously or legally associated by contiguity of place or some tie of little moment, are continually at hand to infest my home, to stun me with their noise and waste me with vexation, while those who are endeared to me by the closest sympathy of manners, of tastes and pursuits, are almost all withheld from my embrace either by death or an insuperable distance of place; and have for the most part been so rapidly hurried from my sight, that my prospects seem continually solitary, and my heart perpetually desolate."

The last letter in the volume ends thus:

"What you term policy, and which I wish that you had rather called patriotic piety, has, if I may so say, almost left me, who was charmed with so sweet a sound, without a country. * * * I will conclude after first begging you, if there be any errors in the diction or the punctuation, to impute it to the han-

who wrote this, who is quite ignorant of Latin, and to whom I was, with no little vexation, *obliged to dictate not the words, but, one by one, the letters of which they were composed.*"

The account of the gradual increase of his blindness is interesting, physiologically as well as otherwise :—

"It is now, I think, about ten years (1654) since I perceived my vision to grow weak and dull ; and, at the same time, I was troubled with pain in my kidneys and bowels, accompanied with flatulency. In the morning, if I began to read, as was my custom, my eyes instantly ached intensely, but were refreshed after a little corporeal exercise. The candle which I looked at seemed as if it were encircled by a rainbow. Not long after the sight in the left part of the left eye (which I lost some years before the other) became quite obscured, and prevented me from discerning any object on that side. The sight in my other eye has now been gradually and sensibly vanishing away for about three years ; some months before it had entirely perished, though I stood motionless, every thing which I looked at seemed in motion to and fro. A stiff cloudy vapor seemed to have settled on my forehead and temples, which usually occasions a sort of somnolent pressure upon my eyes, and particularly from dinner till evening. So that I often recollect what is said of the poet Phineas in the Argonautics :

‘A stupor deep his cloudy temples bound,
And when he waked he seemed as whirling round,
Or in a feeble trance he speechless lay.’

I ought not to omit that, while I had any sight left, as soon as I lay down on my bed, and turned on either side, a flood of light used to gush from my closed eyelids. Then, as my sight became daily more impaired, the colors became more faint, and were emitted with a certain crackling sound ; but, at present, every species of illumination being, as it were, extinguished, there is diffused around me nothing but darkness, or darkness mingled and streaked with an ashy brown. Yet the darkness in which I am perpetually immersed seems always, both by night and day, to approach nearer to a white than black ; and when the eye is rolling in its socket, it admits a little particle of light as through a chink. And though your physician may kindle a small ray of hope, yet I make up my mind to the malady as quite incurable ; and I often reflect, that as the wise man admonishes, days of darkness are destined to each of us. The darkness which I experience, less oppressive than that of the tomb, is owing

the cheering salutations of friendship. But if, as it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God why may not any one acquiesce in the privation of his sight, when God has so amply furnished his mind and his conscience with eyes? While He so tenderly provides for me, while He so graciously leads me by the hand and conducts me on the way, I will, since it is His pleasure, rather rejoice than repine at being blind. And my dear Philura, whatever may be the event, I wish you adieu with no less courage and composure than if I had the eyes of a lynx."

Though the organist was wrapped in utter darkness, 'only mingled and streaked with an ashy brown,' still the organ pealed forth its perpetual, sublime *Te Deum*! Shall we, sitting in the open sun-light, dare tune our humble pipes to any other strain? Thou may'st thank Him, Milton, for, but for this misfortune, thou hadst been a benefactor to the great and strong only, but now to the multitude and suffering also thy voice comes, bidding them 'bate no jot of heart or hope,' with archangelic power and melody.

THE LIFE OF SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

BY HIS SON; ROBERT JAMES MACKINTOSH.

"Biography is by nature the most universally profitable, universally pleasant of all things; especially biography of distinguished individuals." [Opinion of the sagacious Hofrath Henshrecke, as quoted in *Sartor Resartus*.]

If the biography of a distinguished individual be thus especially pleasant a matter, how most of all pleasant is it when a child is found worthy to erect the monument with which the world esteems his father worthy to be honoured! We see that it is no part of the plan of the universe to make nature or talent hereditary. The education of circumstances supersedes that of system, unlooked for influences disturb the natural action of the parent's character on that of the child; and all who have made even a few observations of this sort, must feel that, here as elsewhere, planting and watering had best be done for duty or love's sake, without any sanguine hopes as to the increase. From mistaken notions of freedom, or an ill-directed fondness for experimentalizing, the son is often seen to disregard the precepts or example of his father; and it is a matter of surprise if the scion is found to bear fruit of a similar, not to say equal flavor, with the parent tree.

How opposed all this is to our natural wishes and expectations, (i. e., to our ideal of a state of perfection,) is evident from the pleasure we feel when family relations preserve their harmony, and the father becomes to the son a master and a model—a reverend teacher and a favourite study. Such a happy state of things makes the biography before us very attractive. It is in

itself good, though, probably not as interesting or impressive as one who could have painted the subject from somewhat a greater distance might have made it. The affections of the writer are nowhere obtruded upon us. The feeling shown towards his amiable and accomplished father is every where reverential and tender, nowhere blind or exaggerated. Sir James is always, when possible, permitted to speak for himself; and we are not teased by attempts to heighten or alter the natural effect of his thoughts and opinions. The impressions he produced on different minds are given us unmutilated and unqualified. The youthful errors, and the one great defect which had power to prevent so rich a piece of creation from blooming into all that love or admiration could have wished, are neither dissembled nor excused. Perhaps here Mr. Mackintosh kept in mind his father's admirable remark upon Mrs. Opie's Memoir of her husband. "One passage I object to; where she makes an excuse for not exposing his faults. She ought either to have been absolutely silent, or, with an intrepid confidence in the character of her husband, to have stated faults, which she was sure would not have been dust in the balance, placed in the scale opposite to his merits."

Indeed, the defect here was not to be hidden, since it sapped the noblest undertakings and baffled the highest aspirations of the gentle and generous critic; but we might have been annoyed by awkward attempts to gloss it over, which would have prevented our enjoying in full confidence the record of so many virtues and remarkable attainments. To these discerning and calm justice is done; more, as the son and friend felt, was not needed. And, upon the whole, if filial delicacy has prevented the Life of Sir J. M. from making so brilliant and entertaining a book as it might be in the hands of one who felt at liberty to analyze more deeply and eulogize more eloquently, our knowledge of it as history is probably more correct, and of greater permanent value.

The recollections of childhood are scanty. We see, indeed,

an extraordinary boy, but get little light as to what helped to make him what he was. Generally we know, that if there be anything of talent in a boy, a Scotch mist has wonderful power to draw it out. Add to this, that he lived much in solitude, and on the banks of a beautiful lake. To such means of intellectual developement many a Swiss and many a Highlander has done no visible, or at least so far as this world knoweth, no immortal honour ; but there be hardy striplings, who expand their energies in chasing the deer and the chamois, and act out the impulse, poetic or otherwise, as it rises ; while the little Jamie was fed on books, and taught how thought and feeling may be hoarded and put out at interest while he had plenty of time and means for hoarding. Yet is the precocity natural to a boy of genius when his attention is so little dissipated, and the sphere of exercising his childish energies so limited, very undesirable. For precocity some great price is always demanded sooner or later in life. Nature intended the years of childhood to be spent in perceiving and playing, not in reflecting and acting ; and when her processes are hurried or disturbed, she is sure to exact a penalty. Bacon paid by moral perversion for his premature intellectual developement. Mozart gave half a life for a first half all science and soul. Mackintosh brought out so wonderfully his powers of acquisition at the expense of those of creation, to say nothing of the usual fine of delicate health. How much he lived *out* of books we know not, but he tells us of little else. The details of his best plaything —the boy-club at which he exercised himself, as the every-day boy rides the great horse, or the young Indian tries his father's bow, are interesting. At an early age he went to Aberdeen, where he came under the instruction of a Dr. Dunbar, who, if he did not impart much positive knowledge, seems to have been successful in breathing into his pupil that strong desire of knowing and doing, which is of more value than any thing one can receive from another. Here too, was he happy in that friendship

with Robert Hall, which probably did more for his mind, than all the teachings of all his youthful years. They were eighteen and nineteen years of age, an age when the mind is hoping every thing—fearing nothing ; a time when perfect freedom of intercourse is possible ; for then no community of interests is exacted between two noble natures, except that of aims which may be carried forward into infinity. How beautiful, how purely intellectual, this friendship was, may be best felt from reading the two letters Sir James wrote many years after to Robert Hall upon his recovery from derangement. In these exquisite letters, a subject which would seem almost too delicate for an angel's touch, is in nowise profaned ; and the most elevated, as well as the most consoling view is taken with the confidence of one who had seen into the very depths of Hall's nature. There is no pity, no flattery—no ill-advised application of the wise counsels of calm hours and untried spirits, but that noble and sincere faith, which might have created beneath the ribs of death what it expected to find there. The trust of one who had tried the kernel, and knew that the tree was an oak ; and, though shattered by lightning, could not lose its royalty of nature.

From the scene of metaphysical and religious discussions, which gave such a bias to his mind and character, Sir James went to lead a life of great animal and mental excitement in Edinburgh. Here he first tourneyed with the world, and came off from the lists, not inglorious if not altogether victorious. Already he had loved once ; but this seems, like his after-attachments, not to have been very deep ; and as he ingenuously confesses, declined on his side, without any particular reason, except, indeed, that his character was, at that time growing ; which is reason enough. A man so intellectual, so versatile, and so easily moved as he, was formed to enjoy and need society, both in and out of the domestic circle, but not to be the slave of the Passions, nor yet their master. Perhaps it may be doubted

whether any man can become the master of the passions of others without having some time gone through the apprenticeship, i. e. the slavery to his own. Sir James never had power to electrify at will a large body of men—he had not stored up within the dangerous materials for the “lightning of the mind”—and every way there was more of the Apollo than the Jupiter about him.

At Edinburgh he made many friends, acquired and evaporated many prejudices, learned much, and talked more. Here was confirmed that love, which, degenerating into a need, of society, took from him the power of bearing the seclusion and solitary effort, which would have enabled him to win permanent glory and confer permanent benefits.

Then came his London life, rather a bright page, but of not more happy portent. Compare it with the London experiment of the poet Crabbe, made known to us not long since by the pen of his son. Do we not see here a comment on the hackneyed text, “Sweet are the uses of adversity,” and find reason to admire the impartiality always in the long run to be observed in the distribution of human lots? To view the thing superficially, Crabbe, ill-educated, seemingly fit for no sphere, certainly unable to find any for which he thought himself fit, labouring on poetry, which the most thinking public (of booksellers) would not buy, reduced to his last fourpence, and apparently for ever separated from his Myra, was a less prosperous person than Mackintosh, on whose wit and learning so many brilliant circles daily feasted, whose budding genius mature statesmen delighted to honour, the husband of that excellent woman he has so beautifully described, and the not unsuccessful antagonist of that Burke on whom Crabbe had been a dependant. Yet look more deeply into the matter, and you see Crabbe ripening energy of purpose, and power of patient endurance, into an even heroic strength; nor is there anywhere a finer monument of the dignity to which the human soul can

rise independent of circumstances, than the letter which he wrote to Burke from that fit of depression which could never become abject ; a letter alike honourable to the writer and him to whom it was addressed. In that trial, Crabbe, not found wanting, tested his powers to bear and to act—he ascertained what he would do, and it was done—Mackintosh, squandering at every step the treasures which he had never been forced to count, divided in his wishes, imperfect in his efforts, wanting to himself, though so far above the herd, might well have been glad to leave his flowery paths for those through which Crabbe was led over a stony soil, and beneath a parching sun, but still—upwards. Had it been so, what a noble work might we have had instead of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*! A bright star was that, but we might have had a sun.

Yet had the publication of the *Vindiciæ* been followed by Sir James's getting into parliament, and becoming the English great man, the mover of the day, the minister to the hour, it had been much ; and we should not have been forward to express regret, even though we might deem his natural vocation to be for literature and philosophy. Freedom has so often been obliged to retreat into garrison in England, that the honor of being one of her sentinels there is sufficient for a life. But here again a broken thread—a beginning not followed up. He goes to India, and after that he was always to act with divided soul, and his life could be nothing better than a fragment ; a splendid fragment indeed, but one on which it is impossible to look without sorrowful thoughts of the whole that might have been erected from materials such as centuries may not again bring together.

The mind of man acknowledges two classes of benefactors—those who suggest thoughts and plans, and those who develope and fit for use those already suggested. We are more ready to be grateful to the latter, whose labours are more easily appreciated by their contemporaries ; while the other, smaller class,

really comprises intellects of the higher order, gifted with a rapidity and fertility of conception too great to be wholly brought out in the compass of a short human life. As their heirs and pupils bring into use more and more of the wealth they bequeathed to the world in unwrought ore, they are elevated by posterity from the rank which their own day assigned them of visionaries and obscure thinkers, to be revered almost as the Demigods of literature and science. Notwithstanding the hours of gloom and bitter tears by which such lives are defaced, they are happy to a degree, which those who are born to minister to the moment can never comprehend. For theirs are hours of "deep and uncommunicable joy," hours when the oracle within boldly predicts the time when that which is divine in them, and which they now to all appearance are breathing out in vain, shall become needful as vital air to myriads of immortal spirit.

But Sir James Mackintosh belonged strictly to neither of these classes. Much he learned—thought much—collected much treasure; but the greater part of it was buried with him. Many a prize, hung on high in the intellectual firmament, he could discern with eyes carefully purged from the films of ignorance and grossness; he could discern the steps even by which he might have mounted to the possession of any one which he had resolutely chosen and perseveringly sought—but this he did not. And though many a pillar and many a stone remain to tell where he dwelt and how he strove, we seek in vain for the temple of perfect workmanship with which Nature meant so skilful an architect should have adorned her Earth.

Sir James was an excellent man; a man of many thoughts—of varied knowledge—of liberal views—almost a great man; but he did not become a great man, when he might by more earnestness of purpose; he knew this, and could not be happy. This want of earnestness of purpose, which prevented the goodly tree

from bearing goodly fruit in due season, may be attributed in a great measure to these two causes.

First, the want of systematic training in early life. Much has been well-written and much ill-spoken to prove that minds of great native energy will help themselves, that the best attainments are made from inward impulse, and that outward discipline is likely to impair both grace and strength. Here is some truth—more error. Native energy *will* effect wonders, unaided by school or college. The best attainments *are* made from inward impulse, but it does not follow that outward discipline of any liberality will impair grace or strength ; and it is impossible for any mind fully and harmoniously to ascertain its own wants, without being made to resound from some strong outward pressure. Crabbe helped himself, and formed his peculiar faculties to great perfection ; but Coleridge was well tasked—and not without much hard work could Southey become as “erudite as natural.” The flower of Byron’s genius expanded with little care of the gardener ; but the greatest observer, the deepest thinker, and as the greatest artist, necessarily the warmest admirer of Nature of our time (we refer to Goethe), grew into grace and strength beneath the rules and systems of a disciplinarian father. Genius *will* live and thrive without training, but it does not the less reward the watering-pot and pruning-knife. Let the mind take its own course, and it is apt to fix too exclusively on a pursuit or set of pursuits to which it will devote itself till there is not strength for others, till the mind stands in the relation to a well-balanced mind, that the body of the blacksmith does to that of the gladiator. We are not in favor of a stiff, artificial balance of character, of learning by the hour, and dividing the attention by rule and line ; but the young should be so variously called out and disciplined, that they may be sure that it is a genuine vocation, and not an accidental bias, which decides the course on reaching maturity.

Sir James Mackintosh read and talked through his early

youth ; had he been induced to reproduce in writing and bear more severe mental drudgery, great deeds would have been easy to him in after-days. He acquired such a habit of receiving from books and reproducing only a small part of what he received, and this, too, in slight and daily efforts, that the stimulus of others' thoughts became necessary for his comfort to an enervating degree. Books cease to be food, and become no better than cigars, or gin and water, when indulged in to excess after a certain period. It is distressing to see half the hours of such a man as Sir James Mackintosh for so many years consumed in reading of a desultory, though always interesting nature. We remember no diary that could in this respect vie with his, unless it be Lady M. W. Montague's after she retired from the world. For *her* it was very suitable, but we cannot excuse it in *him*, even beneath the burning Indian sky. We cannot help wishing he had been provided, as Mirabeau always was, with a literary taster and crammer ; or that, at least, he might have felt that a man who means to think and write a great deal, must, after six and twenty, learn to read with his fingers. But nothing can be more luxuriously indolent than his style of reading. Reading aloud too, every evening, was not the thing for a man whom Nature had provided with so many tasks. That his apprenticeship had not been sufficiently severe, he himself felt and sometimes laments. However, the copious journals of his reading are most entertaining, full of penetrating remarks and delicate critical touches. What his friend Lord Jeffrey mentions, "firmness of mind," is remarkable here. Here, carelessly dashed off in a diary, are the best criticisms on Madame de Staël that we have ever seen. She had that stimulating kind of talent which it is hardly possible for any one to criticise calmly who has felt its influence. And, as her pictures of life are such as to excite our hidden sympathies, a very detailed criticism upon her resembles a personal confession, while she is that sort of writer whom it is

very easy to praise or blame in general terms. Sir James has seized the effect produced upon her works by the difference between her ideal and real character. This is one great secret of her eloquence ; to this mournful tone, which vibrates through all her brilliancy, most hearts respond without liking to own it. Here Sir James drew near to her ; his feminine refinement of thought enabled him to appreciate hers, while a less impassioned temperament enabled him coolly to criticise her dazzling intuitions.

How much is comprehended in these few words upon Priestley.

"I have just read Priestley's Life of himself. It is an honest, plain, and somewhat dry account of a well-spent life. But I never read such a narrative, however written, without feeling my mind softened and bettered, at least for a time. Priestley was a good man, though *his life was too busy to leave him leisure for that refinement and ardor of moral sentiment, which have been felt by men of less blameless life.* Frankness and disinterestedness in the avowal of his opinion were his point of honor. In other respects his morality was more useful than brilliant. But the virtue of the sentimental moralist is so over-precious and ostentatious, that he can seldom be entitled to look down with contempt on the steady, though homely morals of the household."

And those upon Mirabeau, to whom it is so very difficult for a good man to do justice. There is something of even Socratic beauty in the following :

"The letters of this extraordinary man are all full of the highest flights of virtuous sentiment, amidst the grossest obscenities and the constant violation of the most sacred duties. Yet these declarations of sentiment were not insincere. They were only useless, and perhaps pernicious, as they concealed from him that depravity which he could scarcely otherwise have endured.

"A fair recital of his conduct must always have the air of invective. Yet his mind had originally grand capabilities. It had many irregular sketches of high virtue, and he must have had many moments of the noblest moral enthusiasm."

We say Socratic beauty, for we know no one since the Greek, who seems to have so great a love for the beautiful in human nature with such a pity—(a pity how unlike the blindness of weak

charity or hypocritical tenderness)—for the odious traits which are sometimes so closely allied with it. Sir James, allowing for all that was perverting in Mirabeau's position acting upon elements so fraught with good and ill, saw him as he was, no demon, but a miserable man become savage and diseased from circumstances.

We should like to enrich this article with the highly finished miniature pictures of Fox, Windham, and Francis Xavier; but here is little room, and we will content ourselves with these striking remarks upon the Hindoo character.

"The Rajpoots are the representatives of Hinduism. In them are seen all the qualities of the Hindu race, unmitigated by foreign mixture, exerted with their original energy, and displayed in the strongest light. They exhibit the genuine form of a Hindu community, formed of the most discordant materials, and combining the most extraordinary contrasts of moral nature, unconquerable adherence to native opinions and usages, with servile submission to any foreign yoke or unbelieving priesthood, ready to suffer martyrdom for the most petty observances of their professed faith; a superstition which inspires the resolution to inflict or to suffer the most atrocious barbarities, without cultivating any natural sentiment or enforcing any social duty; all the stages in the progress of society brought together in one nation, from some abject castes more brutal than the savages of New Zealand, to the polish of manners and refinement of character conspicuous in the upper ranks; attachment to kindred and to home, with no friendship, and no love of country; good temper and gentle disposition; little active cruelty, except when stimulated by superstition; but little sensibility, little compassion, scarcely any disposition to relieve suffering or relieve wrong done to themselves or others. Timidity, with its natural attendants, falsehood and meanness, in the ordinary relations of human life, joined with a capability of becoming excited to courage in the field, to military enthusiasm, to heroic self-devotion. Abstemiousness in some respects more rigorous than that of a western hermit, in a life of intoxication; austerities and self-tortures almost incredible, practised by those who otherwise wallow in gross sensuality, childish levity, barefaced falsehood, no faith, no constancy, no shame, no belief in the existence of justice."

But to return. Sir James's uncommon talents for conversation proved no less detrimental to his glory as an author or as a

statesman, than the want of early discipline. Evanescing as are the triumphs, unsatisfactory as are the results of this sort of power, they are too intoxicating to be despised by any but minds of the greatest strength. Madame de Staél remarks: "Say what you will, men of genius must naturally be good talkers; the full mind delights to vent itself in every way." Undoubtedly the great author, whether of plans or books, will not be likely to say uninteresting things; and unless early habits of seclusion have deprived him of readiness, and made it difficult for him to come near other minds in the usual ways, he will probably talk well. But the most eloquent talkers cannot always converse even pleasingly; of this Madame de Staél herself was a striking instance. To take up a subject and harangue upon it, as was her wont, requires the same habits of mind with writing; to converse, as could Sir J. Mackintosh, supposes habits quite dissimilar. The ready tact to apprehend the mood of your companions and their capacity for receiving what you can bestow, the skill to touch upon a variety of subjects with that lightness, grace, and rapidity, which constantly excite and never exhaust the attention, the love for sparkling sallies, the playfulness and variety, which make a man brilliant and attractive in conversation, are the reverse of the love of method, the earnestness of concentration, and the onward march of thought, which are required by the higher kinds of writing. The butterfly is no less active than the eagle; his wings of gauze move not less swiftly than those stronger pinions, he loses no moment, but visits every flower in the garden, and exults in the sunlight which he enriches: meanwhile the noble, but not more beautiful, winged one is soaring steadily upward to contemplate the source of light from the highest fields of ether. Add to this, that writing seems dry work, and but a languid way of transmitting thought to one accustomed to the electric excitement of personal intercourse; as on the other hand, conversation is generally too aimless and superficial

to suit one, whose mental training has been severe and independent of immediate action from other intellects.

Every kind of power is admirable, and indefinitely useful ; if a man be born to talk, and can be satisfied to bring out his thoughts in conversation only or chiefly, let him. Sir James did so much in this way, stimulated so many young, enchanted and refined so many mature minds, blessed daily so many warm hearts ; as a husband and a father, he appears so amiable, probably so much more so than he would if his ambition had glowed with greater intensity ; what he *did* write, was so excellent, and so calculated to promote the best kind of culture, that if he could have been satisfied, we might ; but he could not ; we find himself in his journals perpetually lamenting that his life was one of "projects and inactivity." For even achievements like his will seem mere idleness to one who has the capacity of achieving and doing so much more. Man can never come up to his ideal standard ; it is the nature of the immortal spirit to raise that standard higher and higher as it goes from strength to strength, still upward and onward. Accordingly the wisest and greatest men are ever the most modest. Yet he who feels that if he ~~is~~ not what he would, he "has done what he could," is not without a serene self-complacency, (how remote from self-sufficiency !) the want of which embittered Sir James's latter years. Four great tasks presented themselves to him in the course of his life, which, perhaps, no man was better able to have performed. Nature seems to have intended him for a philosopher ; since, to singular delicacy and precision of observation, he added such a tendency to generalization. In metaphysics he would have explored far, and his reports would have claimed our confidence ; since his candour and love of truth would have made it impossible for him to become the slave of system. He himself, and those who knew him, were fully sensible of his talents and attainments.

if not of the first class of statesmen, one of the first in the second class.

He went to India, and that large piece taken out of the best part of his life made this also impossible. Had he then devoted his leisure hours to researches on Indian antiquities, how much might he have done in that vast field, where so small a portion of the harvest is yet gathered in. Nobody was better qualified to disregard the common prejudices with respect to the representations of the Hindoos, to find a clue which should guide him through the mighty maze of Indian theology, and remove the world of rubbish, beneath which forms radiant in truth and beauty lie concealed. His fondness for the history of opinion would here have had full scope, and he might have cast a blaze of light upon a most interesting portion of the annals of mankind. This "fair occasion," too, he let slip, and returned to Europe, broken in health and spirits, and weakened, as any man must be, who has passed so many years in occupations which called for only so small a portion of his powers.

Did he then fix his attention on that other noble aim which rose before him, and labour to become for ever illustrious as the historian of his country? No! Man may escape from every foe and every difficulty, except what are within—himself. Sir James, as formerly, worked with a divided heart and will; and Fame substituted a meaner coronal for the amaranthine wreath she had destined for his brow. Greatness was not thrust upon him and he wanted earnestness of purpose to achieve it for himself.

Let us now turn from the sorrowful contemplation of his *one* fault, to the many endearing or splendid qualities intimately connected with, or possibly fostered by this very fault. For so it is, "what makes our virtues thrive openly, will also, if we be not watchful, make our faults thrive in secret;" and vice versa. Let us admire his varied knowledge, his refinement of thought, which was such that only his truly philosophic turn could have

prevented it from degenerating into sophistry ; his devotion, even more tender than enthusiastic, to the highest interests of humanity ; that beautiful fairness of mind, in which he was unequalled, a fairness which evidenced equal modesty, generosity, and pure attachment to truth ; a fairness which made him more sensible to every one's merits, and more ready to perceive the excuses for every one's defects than his own ; a fairness not to be disturbed by party prejudice or personal injury ; a fairness in which nobody, except Sir W. Scott, who was never deeply tried as he was, can compare with him. In what other journal shall we find an entry like the following, the sincerity of which no one can doubt :—

“— has, I think, a distaste for me, which I believe to be natural to the family. I think the worse of nobody for such a feeling ; indeed, I often feel a distaste for myself ; I am sure I should not esteem my own character in another person. It is more likely that I should have disrespectable or disagreeable qualities than that — should have an unreasonable antipathy.”

The letter to Mr. Sharpe on the changes in his own opinions, exhibits this trait to a remarkable degree.

It has been said that had he been less ready to confess his own mistakes of judgment, and less careful to respect the intentions of others, more arrogant in his pretensions and less gentle towards his opponents, he would have enjoyed greater influence, and been saved from many slights and disappointments. Here, at least, is no room for regret.

We have not, of course, attempted anything like a comprehensive criticism upon the Life. The range of Sir James's connexions and pursuits being so wide, and the history of his mind being identical with that of the great political movement of his day, a volume would not give more than verge enough for all the thoughts it naturally suggests. If these few reflections excite the attention of some readers and are acceptable to others, as sympathy, they will afford their legitimate object.

MODERN BRITISH POETS.

"Poets—dwell on earth,
To clothe whate'er the soul admires and loves,
With language and with numbers."

AKENSIDE.

NINE muses were enough for one Greece, and nine poets are enough for one country, even in the nineteenth century. And these nine are "a sacred nine," who, if not quite equal to Shakspeare, Spenser, and Milton, are fairly initiated masters of the wand and spell; and whose least moving incantation should have silenced that blasphemer, who dared to say, in the pages of Blackwood, that "all men, women, and children, are poets, saving only—those who write verses."

First—There is CAMPBELL—a poet; simply a poet—no philosopher. His forte is strong conception, a style free and bold; occasionally a passage is ill-finished, but the lights and shades are so happily distributed, the touch so masterly and vigorous, with such tact at knowing where to stop, that we must *look for* the faults in order to *see* them. There is little, if any, originality of thought; no profound meaning; no esoteric charm, which you cannot make your own on a first reading; yet we have all probably read Campbell many times. It is his *manner* which we admire; and in him we enjoy what most minds enjoy most, not new thoughts, new feelings, but recognition of

"What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

Thus, in Campbell's best productions we are satisfied, not stimulated. "The Mariners of England" is just what it should

be ;—for we find free, deep tones, from the seaman's breast, chorded into harmony by an artist happy enough to feel nature—wise enough to follow nature. “Lochiel” is what it should be, a wild, breezy symphony, from the romantic Highlands. There are, in fact, flat lines and tame passages in “Lochiel ;” but I should never have discovered them, if I had not chanced to hear that noble composition recited by a dull schoolboy. The idealizing tendency in the reader, stimulated by the poet's real magnetic power, would prevent their being perceived in a solitary perusal, and a *bright* schoolboy would have been sufficiently inspired by the general grandeur of the piece ; to have known how to sink such lines as

“Welcome be Cumberland's steed to the shock,
Let him dash his proud foam like a wave on the rock ;”

or,

“Draw, dotard, around thy old, wavering sight ;”

and a few other imperfections in favour of

“Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be torn,”

and other striking passages.

As for the sweet tale of “Wyoming,” the expression of the dying Gertrude's lips is not more “bland, more beautiful,” than the music of the lay in which she is embalmed. It were difficult to read this poem, so holy in its purity and tenderness, so deliciously soft and soothing in its coloring, without feeling better and happier.

The feeling of Campbell towards women is refined and deep. To him they are not angels—not, in the common sense, heroines ; but of a “perfect woman nobly planned,” he has a better idea than most men, or even poets. Witness one of his poems, which has never received its meed of fame ; I allude to Theodric. Who can be insensible to the charms of Constance, the matron counterpart to Gertrude's girlhood ?

"To know her well,
 Prolonged, exalted, bound enchantment's spell;
 For with affections warm, intense, refined,
 She mixed such calm and holy strength of mind,
 That, like Heaven's image in the smiling brook,
 Celestial peace was pictured in her look; *
 Her's was the brow in trials unperplexed,
 That cheered the sad and tranquillized the vexed;
 She studied not the meanest to eclipse,
 And yet the wisest listened to her lips;
 She sang not, knew not Music's magic skill,
 But yet her voice had tones that swayed the will."

* * * * *

"To paint that being to a grovelling mind
 Were like portraying pictures to the blind.
 'Twas needful even infectiously to feel
 Her temper's fond, and firm, and gladsome zeal,
 To share existence with her, and to gain
 Sparks from her love's electrifying chain,
 Of that pure pride, which, lessening to her breast
 Life's ills, gave all its joys a treble zest,
 Before the mind completely understood
 That mighty truth—how happy are the good!
 Even when her light forsook him, it bequeathed
 Ennobling sorrow; and her memory breathed
 A sweetness that survived her living days,
 As odorous scents outlast the censer's blaze.
 Or if a trouble dimmed their golden joy,
 'Twas outward dross and not infused alloy;
Their home knew but affection's look and speech;
 A little Heaven beyond dissension's reach.
 But midst her kindred there was strife and gall;
 Save one congenial sister, they were all
 Such foils to her bright intellect and grace,
 As if she had engrossed the virtue of her race;
 Her nature strove th' unnatural feuds to heal,
 Her wisdom made the weak to her appeal;
 And though the wounds she cured were soon unclosed,
 Unwearied still her kindness interposed."

The stanzas addressed to John Kemble I have never heard admired to the fulness of my feeling. Can any thing be finer than this ?

"A majesty possessed
His transport's most impetuous tone;
And to each passion of his breast
The graces gave their zone."

or,

"Who forgets that white discrowned head,
Those bursts of reason's half-extinguished glare,
Those tears upon Cordelia's bosom shed
In doubt more touching than despair,
If 'twas reality he felt ?"

or,

'Fair as some classic dome,
Robust and richly graced,
Your Kemble's spirit was the home
Of genius and of taste.—
Taste like the silent dial's power,
That, when supernal light is given,
Can measure inspiration's hour
And tell its height in Heaven.
At once ennobled and correct,
His mind surveyed the tragic page;
And what the actor could effect,
The scholar could presage."

These stanzas are in Campbell's best style. Had he possessed as much lyric flow as force, his odes might have vied with those of Collins. But, though soaring upward on a strong pinion, his flights are never prolonged, and in this province, which earnestness and justness of sentiment, simplicity of imagery, and a picturesque turn in expression, seem to have marked out as his own; he is surpassed by Shelley, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, from their greater power of continuous self-impulse.

I do not know where to class Campbell as a poet. What he has done seems to be by snatches, and his poems might have been published under the title of "Leisure Hours, or Recreations of a Great Man." They seem like fragments, not very heedfully stricken off from the bed of a rich quarry; for, with all their individual finish, there is no trace of a fixed purpose to be discerned in them. They appear to be merely occasional effusions, like natural popular poetry; but, as they are written by an accomplished man in these modern days of design and system, we are prompted to look for an aim, a prevailing purpose. We shall not find it. Campbell has given us much delight; if he has not directly stimulated our thoughts, he has done so much to refine our tastes, that we must respectfully tender the poetic garland.

And thou, ANACREON MOORE, sweet warbler of Erin! What an ecstasy of sensation must thy poetic life have been! Certainly the dancing of the blood never before inspired so many verses. Moore's poetry is to literature, what the compositions of Rossini are to music. It is the hey-day of animal existence, embellished by a brilliant fancy, and ardent though superficial affections. The giddy flush of youthful impulse empurples the most pensive strains of his patriotism, throbs in his most delicate touches of pathos, and is felt as much in Tara's Halls as in the description of the Harem. His muse is light of step and free of air, yet not vulgarly free; she is not a little excited, but it is with quaffing the purest and most sparkling champagne. There is no temperance, no chastened harmony in her grief or in her joy. His melodies are metrically perfect; they absolutely set themselves to music, and talk of spring, and the most voluptuous breath of the blossom-laden western breeze, and the wildest notes of the just returning birds. For his poetic embodying of a particular stage of human existence, and his scintillating wit, will Moore chiefly be remembered. He has been boon-companion and toast-master

to the youth of his day. This could not last. When he ceased to be young, and to warble his own verses, their fascination in a great measure disappeared. Many are now not more attractive than dead flowers in a close room. Anacreon cannot really charm when his hair is gray ; there is a time for all things, and the gayest youth loves not the Epicurean old man. Yet he, too, is a poet ; and his works will not be suffered to go out of print, though they are, even now, little read. Of course his reputation as a prose writer is another matter, and apart from our present purpose.

The poetry of WALTER SCOTT has been superseded by his prose, yet it fills no unimportant niche in the literary history of the last half century, and may be read, at least once in life, with great pleasure. "Marmion," "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," &c., cannot, indeed, be companions of those Sabbath hours of which the weariest, dreariest life need not be destitute, for their bearing is not upon the true life of man, his immortal life. Coleridge felt this so deeply, that in a lately published work (Letters, Conversations, &c., of S. T. Coleridge) he is recorded to have said, "not twenty lines of Scott's poetry will ever reach posterity ; it has relation to nothing." This is altogether too harsh, and proves that the philosopher is subject to narrowness and partial views, from his peculiar mode of looking at an object, equally with the mere man of taste. These poems are chiefly remarkable for presenting pictures of particular epochs, and, considered in that light, truly admirable. Much poetry has come down to us, thus far, whose interest is almost exclusively of the same nature ; in which, at least, moral conflict does not constitute the prominent interest.

To one who has read Scott's novels first, and looks in his poems for the same dramatic interest, the rich humor, the tragic force, the highly wrought yet flowing dialogue, and the countless minutiae in the finish of character, they must bring disappoint-

ment. For their excellence consists in graphic descriptions of architecture and natural scenery, a happy choice of subject, and effective grouping of slightly sketched characters, combined with steady march and great simplicity of narrative. Here and there sentiments are introduced, always just and gracefully worded, but without that delicacy of shading, fine and harmonious as Nature's workmanship in the rose-leaf, which delights us in his prose works. It is, indeed, astonishing that he should lose so much by a constraint so lightly worn ; for his facility of versification is wonderful, his numbers seem almost to have coined themselves, and you cannot detect any thing like searching for a word to tag a verse withal. Yet certain it is, we receive no adequate idea of the exuberance and versatility of his genius, or his great knowledge of the human heart, from his poetry. His lore is there as profusely displayed, his good sense and tact as admirable, as in his prose works ; and, if only on account of their fidelity of description, these poems are invaluable, and must always hold a place in English literature. They are interesting too, as giving a more complete idea of the character and habits of one of our greatest and best men, than his remarkable modesty would permit the public to obtain more directly. His modes of life, his personal feelings, are no where so detailed, as in the epistles prefixed to the cantos of Marmion. These bring us close to his side, and leading us with him through the rural and romantic scenes he loved, talk with us by the way of all the rich associations of which he was master. His dogs are with him ; he surveys these dumb friends with the eye of a sportsman and a philosopher, and omits nothing in the description of them which could interest either. An old castle frowns upon the road ; he bids its story live before you with all the animation of a drama and the fidelity of a chronicle. Are topics of the day introduced ? He states his opinions with firmness and composure, expresses his admiration with energy, and, where he dissents from those he

addresses, does so with unaffected candor and cordial benignity. Good and great man ! More and more imposing as nearer seen ; thou art like that product of a superhuman intellect, that stately temple, which rears its head in the clouds, yet must be studied through and through, for months and years, to be appreciated in all its grandeur.

Nothing surprises me more in Scott's poetry, than that a person of so strong imagination should see every thing so in detail as he does. Nothing interferes with his faculty of observation. No minor part is sacrificed to give effect to the whole ; no peculiar light cast on the picture : you only see through a wonderfully far-seeing and accurately observing pair of eyes, and all this when he has so decided a taste for the picturesque. Take, as a specimen, the opening description in *Marmion*.

THE CASTLE.

“ Day set on Norham’s castled steep,
And Tweed’s fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot’s mountains lone ;
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates, where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone ;—
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seemed forms of giant height ;
Their armor, as it caught the rays,
Flashed back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.
St. George’s banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung ;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the donjon tower,
So heavily it hung.

The scouts had parted on their search,
 The castle gates were barred,
 Above the gloomy portal arch,
 Timing his footsteps to a march,
 The warden kept his guard, —
 Low humming, as he passed along,
 Some ancient border gathering song."

How picturesque, yet how minute! Not even Wordsworth, devoted as he is to nature, and to visible as well as invisible truth, can compare with Scott in fidelity of description. Not even Crabbe, that least imaginative of poets, can compare with him for accuracy of touch and truth of colouring. Scott's faculties being nicely balanced, never disturbed one another; we perceive this even more distinctly in his poetry than in his prose, perhaps because less excited while reading it.

I have said that CRABBE was the least imaginative of poets. He has *no* imagination in the commonly received sense of the term; there is nothing of *creation* in his works; nay, I dare affirm, in opposition to that refined critic, Sir James Mackintosh, that there was no touch of an idealizing tendency in his mind; yet he is a poet; he is so through his calm but deep and steady sympathy with all that is human; he is so by his distinguished power of observation; he is so by his graphic skill. No literature boasts an author more individual than Crabbe. He is unique. Moore described him well.

"Grand from the truth that reigns o'er all,
 The unshrinking truth that lets her light
 Through life's low, dark, interior fall,
 Opening the whole severely bright.
 Yet softening, as she frowns along,
 O'er scenes which angels weep to see,
 Where truth herself half veils the wrong
 In pity of the misery."

I could never enter into the state of a mind which could sup-

port viewing life and human nature as Crabbe's did, softened by no cool shadow, gladdened by no rose-light. I wish Sir Walter Scott, when expressing his admiration for the poetry of Crabbe, had told us more distinctly the nature of the impressions he received from it. Sir Walter, while he observes with equal accuracy, is sure to detect something comic or something lovely, some pretty dalliance of light and shade in the "low, dark interior" of the most outwardly desolate hovel. Cowper saw the follies and vices of mankind as clearly, but his Christian love is an ever softly-murmuring under-current, which relieves the rude sounds of the upper world. Crabbe in his view of the human mind may be compared with Cowper or Scott, as the anatomist, in his view of the human form, may be compared with the painter or sculptor. Unshrinking, he tears apart that glorious fabric which has been called "the crown of creation;" he sees its beauty and its strength with calm approval, its weaknesses, its liability to disease, with stern pity or cold indignation. His nicely dissected or undraped virtues are scarcely more attractive than vices, and, with profound knowledge of the passions, not one ray of passionate enthusiasm casts a glow over the dramatic recitative of his poems.

Crabbe has the true spirit of the man of science; he seeks truth alone, content to take all parts of God's creations as they are, if he may but get a distinct idea of the laws which govern them. He sees human nature as only a human being could see it, but he describes it like a spirit which has never known human longings; yet in no unfriendly temper—far from it; but with a strange bleak fidelity, unbiassed either by impatience or tenderness.

The poor and humble owe him much, for he has made them known to the upper classes, not as they ought to be, but as they really are; and in so doing, in distinctly portraying the evils of their condition, he has opened the way to amelioration. He is

the poet of the lower classes, though probably rather valuable to them as an interpreter than agreeable as a household friend. They like something more stimulating, they would prefer gin or rum to lemonade. Indeed, that class of readers rarely like to find themselves in print ; they want something romantic, something which takes them out of their sphere ; and high sounding words, such as they are not in the habit of using, have peculiar charms for them. That is a high stage of culture in which simplicity is appreciated.

The same cold tints pervade Crabbe's descriptions of natural scenery. We can conceive that his eye was educated at the sea-side. An east-wind blows, his colours are sharp and decided, and the glitter which falls upon land and wave has no warmth.

It is difficult to do Crabbe justice, both because the subject is so large a one, and because tempted to discuss it rather in admiration than in love.

I turn to one whom I love still more than I admire ; the gentle, the gifted, the ill-fated Shelley.

Let not prejudice deny him a place among the great ones of the day. The youth of Shelley was unfortunate. He committed many errors ; what else could be expected from one so precocious ? No one begins life so early who is not at some period forced to retrace his steps, and those precepts which are learned so happily from a mother's lips, must be paid for by the heart's best blood when bought from the stern teacher, Experience. Poor Shelley ! Thou wert the warmest of philanthropists, yet doomed to live at variance with thy country and thy time. Full of the spirit of genuine Christianity, yet ranking thyself among unbelievers, because in early life thou hadst been bewildered by seeing it perverted, sinking beneath those precious gifts which should have made a world thine own, intoxicated with thy lyric enthusiasm and thick-coming fancies, adoring Nature

as a goddess, yet misinterpreting her oracles, cut off from life just as thou wert beginning to read it aright; O, most musical, most melancholy singer; who that has a soul to feel genius, a heart to grieve over misguided nobleness, can forbear watering the profuse blossoms of thy too early closed spring with tears of sympathy, of love, and (if we may dare it for one so superior in intellect) of pity?

Although the struggles of Shelley's mind destroyed that serenity of tone which is essential to the finest poetry, and his tenderness has not always that elevation of hope which should hallow it; although in no one of his productions is there sufficient unity of purpose and regulation of parts to entitle it to unlimited admiration, yet they all abound with passages of infinite beauty, and in two particulars, he surpasses any poet of the day,

First, in fertility of Fancy. Here his riches, from want of arrangement, sometimes fail to give pleasure, yet we cannot but perceive that they are priceless riches. In this respect parts of his "Adonais," "Marianne's Dream," and "Medusa," are not to be excelled, except in Shakspeare.

Second, in sympathy with Nature. To her lightest tones his being gave an echo; truly she spoke to him, and it is this which gives unequalled melody to his versification; I say unequalled, for I do not think either Moore or Coleridge can here vie with him, though each is in his way a master of the lyre. The rush, the flow, the delicacy of vibration, in Shelley's verse, can only be paralleled by the waterfall, the rivulet, the notes of the bird and of the insect world. This is a sort of excellence not frequently to be expected now, when men listen less zealously than of old to the mystic whispers of Nature; when little is understood that is not told in set phrases, and when even poets write more frequently in curtained and carpeted rooms, than "among thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees and flowery glades," as Shelley did.

It were "a curious piece of work enough," to run a parallel between the Skylark of Shelley and that of Wordsworth, and thus illustrate mental processes so similar in dissimilitude. The mood of mind, the ideas, are not unlike in the two. Hear Wordsworth.

"*Up with me, up with me, into the clouds,*" etc.

"Lift me, guide me, till I find
The spot which seems so to thy mind,
I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary,
Had I now the wings of a Fairy
Up to thee would I fly;
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine:

"Joyous as morning, thou art laughing and scorning;
And though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark, thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveller as I!

Happy, happy liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river,
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both."

Hear Shelley.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher,
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun;

O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
 Thou dost float and run
 Like an unbodied joy, whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
 Melts around thy flight;
 Like a star of heaven,
 In the broad daylight,
 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.

Keen as are the arrows
 Of that silver sphere,
 Whose intense lamp narrows
 In the white dawn clear,
 Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
 With thy voice is loud,
 As, when night is bare,
 From one lonely cloud
 The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
 What is most like thee?
 From rainbow clouds there flow not
 Drops so bright to see,
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden,
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour,
 With music sweet as love which overflows her bower.

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew

Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet, those heavy-wingèd thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,
Or triumphant chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be;
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety."

I do not like to omit a word of it: but it is taking too much room. Should we not say from the samples before us that Shel-

ley, in melody and exuberance of fancy, was incalculably superior to Wordsworth? But mark their *inferences*.

Shelley.

" Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow
 The world should listen, then, as I am listening now."

Wordsworth.

" What though my course be rugged and uneven,
 To prickly moors and dusty ways confined,
 Yet, hearing thee and others of thy kind
 As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
 I o'er the earth will go plodding on
 By myself, cheerfully, till the day is done."

If Wordsworth have superiority then, it consists in greater maturity and dignity of sentiment.

While reading Shelley, we must surrender ourselves without reserve to the magnetic power of genius; we must not expect to be satisfied, but rest content with being stimulated. He alone who can resign his soul in unquestioning simplicity to the descendant of the nightingale or the absorption of the sea-side, may hope to receive from the mind of a Shelley the suggestions which, to those who know how to receive, he can so liberally impart.

I cannot leave Shelley without quoting two or three stanzas, in which he speaks of himself, and which are full of his peculiar beauties and peculiar faults.

" A frail form,
 A phantom among men, companionless,
 As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
 Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
 Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness
 Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray.

With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued like raging hounds their father and their prey.
A pard-like Spirit, beautiful and swift—
A love in desolation masked; a power
Girt round with weakness; it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow; even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly; on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear, topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noon-day dew,
Vibrated as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer, struck by the hunter's dart."

Shelley is no longer "neglected," but I believe his works have never been republished in this country, and therefore these extracts may be new to most readers.

Byron naturally in our hall of imagery takes place next his friend. Both are noble poetic shapes, both mournful in their beauty. The radiant gentleness of Shelley's brow and eye delight us, but there are marks of suffering on that delicate cheek and about that sweet mouth; while a sorrowful indignation curls too strongly the lip, lightens too fiercely in the eye, of Byron.

The unfortunate Byron, (*unfortunate* I call him, because "mind and destiny are but two names for one idea,") has long been at rest; the adoration and the hatred of which he was the object, are both dying out. His poems have done their work; a strong personal interest no longer gives them a factitious charm,

and they are beginning to find their proper level. Their value is two-fold—immortal and eternal, as records of thoughts and feelings which must be immortally and eternally interesting to the mind of individual man ; historical, because they are the most complete chronicle of a particular set of impulses in the public mind.

How much of the first sort of value the poems of Byron possess, posterity must decide, and the verdict can only be ascertained by degrees ; I, for one, should say not much. There are many beautiful pictures ; infinite wit, but too local and temporary in its range to be greatly prized beyond his own time ; little originality ; but much vigor, both of thought and expression ; with a deep, even a passionate love of the beautiful and grand. I have often thought, in relation to him, of Wordsworth's description of

"A youth to whom was given
So much of Earth, so much of Heaven,
And such impetuous blood."

* * * * *

"Whatever in those climes he found,
Irregular in sight or sound,
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and lovely flowers ;
The breezes their own languor lent,
The stars had feelings which they sent
Into those gorgeous bowers.

And in his worst pursuits, I ween,
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent.

For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment."

It is worthy of remark that Byron's moral perversion never paralyzed or obscured his intellectual powers, though it might lower their aims. With regard to the plan and style of his works, he showed strong good sense and clear judgment. The man who indulged such narrowing egotism, such irrational scorn, would prune and polish without mercy the stanzas in which he uttered them ; and this bewildered Idealist was a very bigot in behoof of the commonsensical satirist, the almost peevish Realist —Pope.

Historically these poems are valuable as records of that strange malady, that sickness of the soul, which has, in our day, cankered so visibly the rose of youth. It is common to speak of the Byronic mood as morbid, false, and foolish ; it is the two former, and, if it could be avoided, would most assuredly be the latter also. But how can it always be avoided ? Like as a fever rages in the blood before we are aware, even so creeps upon the soul this disease, offspring of a moral malaria, an influence impalpable till we feel its results within ourselves. Since skilful physicians are not always at hand, would it not be better to purify the atmosphere than to rail at the patient ? Those who have passed through this process seem to have wondrous little pity for those who are still struggling with its horrors, and very little care to aid them. Yet if it be disease, does it not claim pity, and would it not be well to try some other remedy than hard knocks for its cure ? What though these sick youths do mourn and lament somewhat wearisomely, and we feel vexed, on bright May mornings, to have them try to persuade us that this beautiful green earth, with all its flowers and bird-notes, is no better than a vast hospital ? Consider, it is a relief to the delirious to rave audibly, and few, like Professor Teufelsdröck, have strength to

keep a whole Satanic school in the soul from spouting aloud. What says the benign Uhland ?

“ If our first lays too piteous have been,
And you have feared our tears would never cease,
If we too gloomily life’s prose have seen,
Nor suffered Man nor Mouse to dwell in peace,
Yet pardon us for our youth’s take. The vine
Must weep from her crushed grapes the generous wine;
Not without pain the precious beverage flows;
Thus joy and power may yet spring from the woes
Which have so wearied every long-tasked ear ;” &c.

There is no getting rid of the epidemic of the season, however annoying and useless it may seem. You cannot cough down an influenza ; it will cough you down.

Why young people will just now profess themselves so very miserable, for no better reason than that assigned by the poet to some “ inquiring friends,”

“ Nought do I mourn I e’er possessed,
I grieve that I cannot be blessed ;”

I have here no room to explain. Enough that there has for some time prevailed a sickliness of feeling, whose highest water-mark may be found in the writings of Byron. He is the “ power man” (as the Germans call him, meaning perhaps the *power-loom* !) who has woven into one tissue all those myriad threads, tear-stained and dull-gray, with which the malignant spiders of speculation had filled the machine shop of society, and by so doing has, though I admit, unintentionally, conferred benefits upon us incalculable for a long time to come. He has lived through this experience for us, and shown us that the natural fruits of indulgence in such a temper are dissonance, cynicism, irritability, and all uncharitableness. Accordingly, since his time the evil has lessened. With this warning before them, let the young examine

that world, which seems at times so deformed by evils and endless contradictions,

"Control them and subdue, transmute, bereave
Of their bad influence, and the good receive."

Grief loses half its charm when we find that others have endured the same to a higher degree, and lived through it. Nor do I believe that the misanthropy of Byron ever made a single misanthrope ; that his scepticism, so uneasy and sorrowful beneath its thin mask of levity, ever made a single sceptic. I know those whom it has cured of their yet half-developed errors. I believe it has cured thousands.

As supplying materials for the history of opinion, then, Byron's poems will be valuable. And as a poet, I believe posterity will assign him no obscure place, though he will probably be classed far beneath some who have exercised a less obvious or immediate influence on their own times ; beneath the noble Three of whom I am yet to speak, whose merits are immortal, because their tendencies are towards immortality, and all whose influence must be a growing influence ; beneath Southeby, Coleridge, and Wordsworth.

Before proceeding to discuss these last, for which there is hardly room in the present paper, I would be allowed to conclude this division of my subject with a fine passage in which Shelley speaks of Byron. I wish to quote it, because it is of kindred strain with what Walter Scott and Rogers (in his "Italy") have written about their much abused compeer. It is well for us to see great men judging so gently, and excusing so generously, faults from which they themselves are entirely free ; faults at which men of less genius, and less purity too, found it so easy and pleasant to rail. I quote it in preference to any thing from Scott and Rogers, because I presume it to be less generally known.

In apostrophizing Venice, Shelley says,

“Perish! let there only be
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea,
As the garment of thy sky
Clothes the world immortally,
One remembrance more sublime
Than the tattered pall of Time,
Which scarce hides thy visage wan;
That a tempest-cleaving swan
Of the songs of Albion,
Driven from his ancestral streams
By the might of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
Welcomed him with such emotion
That its joy grew his, and sprung
From his lips like music flung
O'er a mighty thunder-fit
Chastening terror;—What though yet
Poesy's unfailing river,
Which through Albion winds for ever
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred poet's grave,
Mourn its latest nursling fled!
What though thou, with all thy dead,
Scarce can for this fame repay
Aught thine own;—oh, rather say
Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Overcloud a sun-like soul!
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round Scamander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakespeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light;
Like omniscient power, which he
Imaged 'mid mortality:
As the love from Petrarch's urn
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
A quenchless lamp by which the heart
Sees things unearthly; so thou art,
Mighty spirit; so shall be
The city that did refuge thee.”

In earlier days the greatest poets addressed themselves more to the passions or heart-emotions of their fellow-men than to their thoughts or mind-emotions. The passions were then in their natural state, and held their natural places in the character. They were not made sickly by a false refinement, or stimulated to a diseased and incessantly craving state. Men loved and hated to excess, perhaps; but there was nothing factitious in their love or hatred. The tone of poetry, even when employed on the most tragic subjects, might waken in the hearer's heart a chord of joy; for in such natural sorrow there was a healthful life, an energy which told of healing yet to come and the endless riches of love and hope.

How different is its tone in Faust and Manfred; how false to simple nature, yet how true to the time! As the mechanism of society has become more complex, and must be regulated more by combined efforts, desire after individuality brings him who manifests it into a state of conflict with society. This is felt from a passion, whether it be love or ambition, which seeks to make its own world independent of trivial daily circumstances, and struggles long against the lessons of experience, which tell it that such singleness of effort and of possession cannot be, consistently with that grand maxim of the day, *the greatest happiness of the greatest number*. Not until equally enlightened and humble, can the human being learn that individuality of character is not necessarily combined with individuality of possession, but depends alone on the zealous observance of truth. Few can be wise enough to realize with Schiller, that "to be truly immortal one must live in the whole." The mind struggles long, before it can resolve on sacrificing any thing of its impulsive nature to the requisitions of the time. And while it struggles it mourns, and these lamentations compose the popular poetry. Men do not now look in poetry for a serene world, amid whose vocal groves and green meads they may refresh themselves after the heat of action,

and in paradisaical quiet listen to the tales of other days. No ! dissatisfied and represt, they want to be made to weep, because, in so doing, they feel themselves in some sense free.

All this conflict and apparently bootless fretting and wailing mark a transition-state—a state of gradual revolution, in which men try all things, seeking what they hold fast, and feel that it is good. But there are some, the pilot-minds of the age, who cannot submit to pass all their lives in experimentalizing. They cannot consent to drift across the waves in the hope of finding *somewhere* a haven and a home ; but, seeing the blue sky over them, and believing that God's love is every where, try to make the best of that spot on which they have been placed, and, not unfrequently, by the aid of spiritual assistance, more benign than that of Faust's Lemures, win from the raging billows large territories, whose sands they can convert into Eden bowers, tenanted by lovely and majestic shapes.

Such are Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. They could not be satisfied, like Byron, with embodying the peculiar wit or peculiar sufferings of the times ; nor like Scott, with depicting an era which has said its say and produced its fruit : nor like Campbell, with occasionally giving a voice and a permanent being to some brilliant moment or fair scene. Not of nobler nature, not more richly endowed than Shelley, they were not doomed to misguided efforts and baffled strivings ; much less could they, like Moore, consider poetry merely as the harmonious expression of transient sensations. To them Poetry was, must be, the expression of what is eternal in man's nature, through illustrations drawn from his temporal state ; a representation in letters of fire, on life's dark curtain, of that which lies beyond ; philosophy dressed in the robes of Taste and Imagination ; the voice of Nature and of God, humanized by being echoed back from the understanding hearts of Priests and Seers ! Of course this could not be the popular poetry of the day. Being eminently the pro-

duct of reflection and experience, it could only be appreciated by those who had thought and felt to some depth. I confess that it is not the best possible poetry, since so exclusively adapted to the meditative few. In Shakspeare, or Homer, there is for minds of every grade as much as they are competent to receive, the shallow or careless find there amusement; minds of a higher order, meaning which enlightens and beauty which enchants them.

This fault which I have admitted, this want of universality is not surprising, since it was necessary for these three poets to stand apart from the tide of opinion, and disregard the popular tastes, in order to attain firmness, depth, or permanent beauty. And they being, as I have said, the pilot-minds of their time, their works enjoy a growing, though not a rapidly growing, popularity.

Coleridge, in particular, is now very much read, nor, notwithstanding his was but occasional homage to the shrine of poesy, was he the least valuable votary of the three, since, if he has done least, if his works form a less perfect whole, and are therefore less satisfactory than those of the other two, he is far more suggestive, more filled with the divine magnetism of intuition, than they.

The muse of Southey is a beautiful statue of crystal, in whose bosom burns an immortal flame. We hardly admire, as they deserve, the perfection of the finish, and the elegance of the contours, because our attention is so fixed on the radiance which glows through them.

Thus Southey is remarkable for the fidelity, and still more for the grace, of his descriptions; for his elegant manner of expressing sentiments noble, delicate, and consistent in their tone; for his imagination, but, more than all, for his expansive and fervent piety.

In his fidelity of description there is nothing of the minute

accuracy of Scott. Southeby takes no pleasure in making little dots and marks ; his style is free and bold, yet always true, sometimes elaborately true, to nature. Indeed, if he has a fault, it is that he elaborates too much. He himself has said that poetry should be “thoroughly erudite, thoroughly animated, and thoroughly natural.” His poetry cannot always boast of the two last essentials. Even in his most brilliant passages there is nothing of the heat of inspiration, nothing of that celestial fire which makes us feel that the author has, by intensifying the action of his mind, raised himself to communion with superior intelligences. It is where he is most calm that he is most beautiful ; and, accordingly, he is more excellent in the expression of sentiment than in narration. Scarce any writer presents to us a sentiment with such a tearful depth of expression ; but though it is a tearful depth, those tears were shed long since, and Faith and Love have hallowed them. You nowhere are made to feel the bitterness, the vehemence of present emotion ; but the phœnix born from passion is seen hovering over the ashes of what was once combined with it. Southeby is particularly exquisite in painting those sentiments which arise from the parental and filial relation : whether the daughter looks back from her heavenly lover, and the opening bowers of bliss, still tenderly solicitous for her father, whom she, in the true language of woman’s heart, recommends to favour, as

“ That wretched, persecuted, *poor good man* ;”

or the father, as in “ Thalaba,” shows a faith in the benignity and holiness of his lost daughter, which the lover, who had given up for her so high a destiny, wanted ;—or, as in “ Roderick,” the miserable, sinful child wanders back to relieve himself from the load of pollution at the feet of a sainted mother ; always—always he speaks from a full, a sanctified soul, in tones of thrilling melody.

The imagination of Southey is marked by similar traits ; there is no flash, no scintillation about it, but a steady light as of day itself. As specimens of his best manner, I would mention the last stage of Thalaba's journey to the Domdaniel Caves, and, in the "Curse of Kehama," the sea-palace of Baly, "The Glendoveer," and "The Ship of Heaven." As Southey's poems are not very generally read, I will extract the two latter :

"THE SHIP OF HEAVEN.

"THE ship of heaven, instinct with thought displayed
Its living sail and glides along the sky,
 On either side, in wavy tide,
The clouds of morn along its path divide ;
The winds that swept in wild career on high,
Before its presence check their charmed force ;
The winds that, loitering, lagged along their course
 Around the living bark enamored play,
Swell underneath the sail, and sing before its way.

"That bark in shape was like the furrowed shell
Wherein the sea-nymphs to their parent king,
On festal days their dutious offerings bring ;
Its hue ? go watch the last green light
Ere evening yields the western sky to night,
Or fix upon the sun thy strenuous sight
Till thou hast reached its orb of chrysolite.

The sail, from end to end displayed,
Bent, like a rainbow, o'er the maid ;
 An angel's head with visual eye,
Through trackless space directs its chosen way ;
 Nor aid of wing, nor foot nor fin,
Requires to voyage o'er the obedient sky.
Smooth as the swan when not a breeze at even
 Disturbs the surface of the silver stream,
Through air and sunshine sails the ship of heaven."

Southey professes to have borrowed the description of the Glendoveer from an old and forgotten book. He has given the prose

extract in a note to the "Curse of Kehama," and I think no one can compare the two without feeling that the true alchymy has been at work there. His poetry is a new and life-giving element to the very striking thoughts he borrowed. Charcoal and diamonds are not more unlike in their effect upon the observer.

"THE GLENDOVEER.

"Of human form divine was he,
The immortal youth of heaven who floated by,
Even such as that divinest form shall be
In those blest stages of our mortal race,
When no infirmity,
Low thought, nor base desire, nor wasting care
Deface the semblance of our heavenly sire—
The wings of eagle or of cherubim
Had seemed unworthy him ;
Angelic power and dignity and grace
Were in his glorious pennons; from the neck
Down to the ankle reached their swelling web
Richer than robes of Tyrian dye, that deck
Imperial majesty :
Their color, like the winter's moonless sky
When all the stars of midnight's canopy
Shine forth ; or like the azure deep at noon,
Reflecting back to heaven a brighter blue,
Such was their tint when closed, but when outspread,
The permeating light
Shed through their substance thin a varying hue ;
Now bright as when the rose,
Beauteous as fragrant, gives to scent and sight
A like delight, now like the juice that flows
From Douro's generous vine,
Or ruby when with deepest red it glows ;
Or as the morning clouds resplendent shine
When at forthcoming of the lord of day,
The orient, like a shrine,
Kindles as it receives the rising ray,
And heralding his way

Proclaims the presence of the power divine—
 Thus glorious were the wings
Of that celestial spirit, as he went
 Disporting through his native element—
 Nor these alone.
The gorgeous beauties that they gave to view;
Through the broad membrane branched a pliant bone,
 Spreading like fibres from their parent stem;
Its vines like interwoven silver shone;
 Or as the chaster hue
Of pearls that grace some sultan's diadem..
Now with slow stroke and strong, behold him smite
 The buoyant air, and now in gentler flight
On motionless wing expanded, shoot along."

All Southey's works are instinct, and replete with the experiences of piety, from that fine picture of natural religion, Joan of Arc's confession of faith, to that as noble sermon as ever was preached upon Christianity, the penitence of Roderic the Goth. This last is the most original and elevated in its design of all Southey's poems. In "Thalaba" and "Joan of Arc," he had illustrated the power of faith; in "Mardon" contrasted religion under a pure and simple form with the hydra ugliness of superstition. In "Kehama" he has exhibited virtue struggling against the most dreadful inflictions with heavenly fortitude, and made manifest to us the angel-guards who love to wait on innocence and goodness. But in Roderic the design has even a higher scope, is more difficult of execution; and, so far as I know, unique. The temptations which beset a single soul have been a frequent subject, and one sure of sympathy if treated with any power. Breathlessly we watch the conflict, with heartfelt anguish mourn defeat, or with heart-expanding triumph hail a conquest. But, where there *has* been defeat, to lead us back with the fallen one through the thorny and desolate paths of repentance to purification, to win not only our pity, but our sympathy, for one crushed and degraded by his own sin; and finally,

through his faithful though secret efforts to redeem the past, secure to him, justly blighted and world-forsaken as he is, not only our sorrowing love, but our respect ;—*this* Southey alone has done, perhaps alone could do. As a scene of unrivalled excellence, both for its meaning and its manner, I would mention that of Florinda's return with "Roderic," (who is disguised as a monk, and whom she does not know,) to her father ; when after such a strife of heart-rending words and heart-broken tears, they, exhausted, seat themselves on the bank of the little stream, and watch together the quiet moon. Never has Christianity spoken in accents of more penetrating tenderness since the promise was given to them that be weary and heavy-laden.

Of Coleridge I shall say little. Few minds are capable of fathoming his by their own sympathies, and he has left us no adequate manifestation of himself as a poet by which to judge him. For his dramas, I consider them complete failures, and more like visions than dramas. For a metaphysical mind like his to attempt that walk, was scarcely more judicious than it would be for a blind man to essay painting the bay of Naples. Many of his smaller pieces are perfect in their way, indeed no writer could excel him in depicting a single mood of mind, as *Dejection*, for instance. Could Shakspeare have surpassed these lines ?

"A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear.

O Lady, in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle wooed,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,

Have I been gazing on the western sky
And its peculiar tint of yellow green :

And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars ;

Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen ;
Yon crescent moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue ;
I see them all, so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are !
My genial spirits fail,
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast ?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the West,
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life whose fountains are within."

Give Coleridge a canvass, and he will paint a single mood as if his colors were made of the mind's own atoms. Here he is very unlike Southey. There is nothing of the spectator about Coleridge ; he is all life ; not impassioned, not vehement, but searching, intellectual life, which seems "listening through the frame" to its own pulses.

I have little more to say at present except to express a great, though not fanatical veneration for Coleridge, and a conviction that the benefits conferred by him on this and future ages are as yet incalculable. Every mind will praise him for what it can best receive from him. He can suggest to an infinite degree ; he can *inform*, but he cannot *reform* and renovate. To the unprepared he is nothing, to the prepared, every thing. Of him may be said what he said of Nature,

" We receive but what we give,
In kind though not in measure."

I was once requested, by a very sensible and excellent personage to explain what is meant by "Christabel" and "The Ancient Mariner." I declined the task. I had not then seen Coleridge's answer to a question of similar tenor from Mrs. Barbauld,

or I should have referred to that as an expression, not altogether unintelligible, of the discrepancy which must ever exist between those minds which are commonly styled *rational*, (as the received definition of *common* sense is insensibility to *uncommon* sense,) and that of Coleridge. As to myself, if I understand nothing beyond the execution of those “singularly wild and original poems,” I could not tell my gratitude for the degree of refinement which Taste has received from them. To those who cannot understand the voice of Nature or Poetry, unless it speak in apothegms, and tag each story with a moral, I have nothing to say. My own greatest obligation to Coleridge I have already mentioned. It is for his suggestive power that I thank him.

Wordsworth ! beloved friend and venerated teacher ; it is more easy and perhaps as profitable to speak of thee. It is less difficult to interpret thee, since no *acquired nature*, but merely a theory, severs thee from my mind.

Classification on such a subject is rarely satisfactory, yet I will attempt to define in that way the impressions produced by Wordsworth on myself. I esteem his characteristics to be—of Spirit,

Perfect simplicity,

Perfect truth,

Perfect love.

Of mind or talent,

Calmness,

Penetration,

Power of Analysis.

Of manner,

Energetic greatness,

Pathetic tenderness,

Mild, persuasive eloquence.

The time has gone by when groundlings could laugh with impunity at “Peter Bell” and the “Idiot Mother.” Almost every

line of Wordsworth has been quoted and requoted ; every feeling echoed back, and every drop of that "cup of still and serious thought" drunk up by some "spirit profound ;" enough to satisfy the giver.

Wordsworth is emphatically the friend and teacher of mature years. Youth, in whose bosom "the stately passions burn," is little disposed to drink with him from the

"urn
Of lowly pleasure."

He has not an idealizing tendency, if by this be meant the desire of creating from materials supplied by our minds, and by the world in which they abide for a season, a new and more beautiful world. It is the aspiration of a noble nature animated by genius, it is allied with the resolve for self-perfection ; and few, without some of its influence, can bring to blossom the bud of any virtue. It is fruitful in illusions, but those illusions have heavenly truth interwoven with their temporary errors. But the mind of Wordsworth, like that of the man of science, finds enough of beauty in the real present world. He delights in penetrating the designs of God, rather than in sketching designs of his own. Generally speaking, minds in which the faculty of observation is so prominent, have little enthusiasm, little dignity of sentiment. That is, indeed, an intellect of the first order, which can see the great in the little, and dignify the petty operations of Nature, by tracing through them her most sublime principles. Wordsworth scrutinizes man and nature with the exact and searching eye of a Cervantes, a Fielding, or a Richter, but without any love for that humorous wit which cannot obtain its needful food unaided by such scrutiny ; while dissection merely for curiosity's sake is his horror. He has the delicacy of perception, the universality of feeling which distinguish Shakspeare and the three or four other poets of the first class, and might have taken rank with them had

he been equally gifted with versatility of talent. Many might reply, "in wanting this last he wants the better half." To this I cannot agree. Talent, or facility in making use of thought, is dependent, in a great measure, on education and circumstance; while thought itself is immortal as the soul from which it radiates. Wherever we perceive a profound thought, however imperfectly expressed, we offer a higher homage than we can to commonplace thoughts, however beautiful, or if expressed with all that grace of art which it is often most easy for ordinary minds to acquire. There is a suggestive and stimulating power in original thought which cannot be gauged by the first sensation or temporary effect it produces. The circles grow wider and wider as the impulse is propagated through the deep waters of eternity. An exhibition of talent causes immediate delight; almost all of us can enjoy seeing a thing well done; not all of us can enjoy being roused to do and dare for ourselves. Yet when the mind is roused to penetrate the secret meaning of each human effort, a higher pleasure and a greater benefit may be derived from the rude but masterly sketch, than from the elaborately finished miniature. In the former case our creative powers are taxed to supply what is wanting, while in the latter our tastes are refined by admiring what another has created. Now, since I esteem Wordsworth as superior in originality and philosophic unity of thought, to the other poets I have been discussing, I give him the highest place, though they may be superior to *him* either in melody, brilliancy of fancy, dramatic power, or general versatility of talent. Yet I do not place him on a par with those who combine those minor excellencies with originality and philosophic unity of thought. He is not a Shakspeare, but he is the greatest poet of the day; and this is more remarkable, as he is, par excellence, a didactic poet.

I have paid him the most flattering tribute in saying that there is not a line of his which has not been quoted and requoted.

Men have found such a response to their lightest as well as their deepest feelings, such beautiful morality with such lucid philosophy, that every thinking mind has, consciously or unconsciously, appropriated something from Wordsworth. Those who have never read his poems have imbibed some part of their spirit from the public or private discourse of his happy pupils ; and it is, as yet, impossible to estimate duly the effect which the balm of his meditations has had in allaying the fever of the public heart, as exhibited in the writings of Byron and Shelley.

But, as I said before, he is not for youth, he is too tranquil. His early years were passed in listening to, his mature years in interpreting, the oracles of Nature ; and though in pity and in love he sympathizes with the conflicts of life, it is not by mingling his tears with the sufferer's, but by the consolations of patient faith, that he would heal their griefs.

The sonnet on Tranquillity, to be found in the present little volume, exhibits him true to his old love and natural religion.

“Tranquillity ! the solemn aim wert thou
In heathen schools of philosophic lore ;
Heart-stricken by stern destiny of yore,
The tragic muse thee served with thoughtful vow ;
And what of hope Elysium could allow
Was fondly seized by Sculpture, to restore
Peace to the mourner's soul ; but he who wore
The crown of thorns around his bleeding brow,
Warmed our sad being with his glorious light ;
Then arts which still had drawn a softening grace
From shadowy fountains of the Infinite,
Communed with that idea face to face ;
And move around it now as planets run,
Each in its orbit round the central sun.”

The doctrine of tranquillity does not suit the impetuous blood of the young, yet some there are, who, with pulses of temperate and even though warm and lively beat, are able to prize such

poetry from their earliest days. One young person in particular I knew, very like his own description of

"Those whose hearts every hour run wild,
But never yet did go astray ;"

who had read nothing but Wordsworth, and had by him been plentifully fed. I do not mean that she never skimmed novels nor dipped into periodicals ; but she never, properly speaking, read, i. e. comprehended and reflected on any other book. But as all knowledge has been taught by Professor Jacotot from the *Telemachus* of Fenelon, so was she taught the secrets of the universe from Wordsworth's poems. He pointed out to her how

"The primal duties shine aloft like stars,
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers."

He read her lectures about the daisy, the robin red-breast, and the waterfall. He taught her to study Nature and *feel* God's presence ; to enjoy and prize human sympathies without needing the stimulus of human passions ; to love beauty with a faith which enabled her to perceive it amid seeming ugliness, to hope goodness so as to create it. And she was a very pretty specimen of Wordsworthianism ; so sincere, so simple, so animated and so equable, so hopeful and so calm. She was confiding as an infant, and so may remain till her latest day, for she has no touch of idolatry ; and her trustfulness is not in any chosen person or persons, but in the goodness of God, who will always protect those who are true to themselves and sincere towards others.

But the young, in general, are idolaters. They will have their private chapels of ease in the great temple of nature ; they will ornament, according to fancy, their favorite shrines ; and ah ! too frequently look with aversion or contempt upon all others. Till this ceases to be so, till they can feel the general beauty of design, and live content to be immortal in the grand whole, they

cannot really love Wordsworth ; nor can to them " the simplest flower" bring " thoughts that lie too deep for tears." Happy his pupils ; they are gentle, they are calm, and they must always be progressing in our knowledge ; for, to a mind which can sympathize with his, no hour, no scene can possibly be barren.

The contents of the lately published little volume* accord perfectly, in essentials, with those of the preceding four. The sonnets are like those he has previously written—equally unfinished as sonnets, equally full of meaning as poems. If it be the case with all his poems, that scarcely one forms a perfect whole by itself, but is valuable as a leaf out of his mind, it is peculiarly so with his sonnets. I presume he only makes use of this difficult mode of writing because it is a concise one for the expression of a single thought or a single mood. I know not that one of his sonnets is polished and wrought to a point, as this most artistical of all poems should be ; but neither do I know one which does not contain something we would not willingly lose. As the beautiful sonnet which I shall give presently, whose import is so wide and yet so easily understood, contains in the motto, what Messer Petrarca would have said in the two concluding lines.

(Miss not the occasion ; by the forelock take
That subtle power, the never-halting time,
Lest a mere moment's putting off should make
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime)—

" Wait, prithee, wait ! this answer Lesbia threw
Forth to her dove, and took no further heed ;
Her eyes were busy, while her fingers flew
Across the harp, with soul-engrossing speed ;
But from that bondage when her thoughts were freed,
She rose, and toward the shut casement drew,
Whence the poor, unregarded favourite, true
To old affections, had been heard to plead
With flapping wing for entrance—What a shriek

* Yarrow Revisited, and other poems.

Forced from that voice so lately tuned to a strain
Of harmony!—a shriek of terror, pain,
And self-reproach!—for from aloft a kite
Pounced, and the dove, which from its ruthless beak
She could not rescue, perished in her sight!"

Even the Sonnet upon Sonnets, so perfect in the details, is not perfect as a whole.

However, I am not so fastidious as some persons about the dress of a thought. These sonnets are so replete with sweetness and spirit, that we can excuse their want of symmetry; and probably should not feel it, except from comparison with more highly-finished works of the same kind. One more let me extract, which should be laid to heart:

"Desponding father! mark this altered bough
So beautiful of late, with sunshine warmed,
Or moist with dews; what more unsightly now,
Its blossom shrivelled, and its fruit, if formed,
Invisible! yet Spring her genial brow
Knits not o'er that discolouring and decay
As false to expectation. Nor fret thou
At like unlovely process in the May
Of human life; a stripling's graces blow,
Fade and are shed, that from their timely fall
(Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may grow
Rich mellow bearings that for thanks shall call;
In all men sinful is it to be slow
To hope—in parents sinful above all."

"Yarrow Revisited" is a beautiful reverie. It ought to be read as such, for it has no determined aim. These are fine verses.

"And what for this frail world were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us?

“Nor deem that localized romance
Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
For fanciful dejections;
Ah, no! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is—our changeful life,
With friends and kindred dealing.”

and this stanza,

“Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And care waylay their steps—a sprite
Not easily eluded.”

reminds us of what Scott says in his farewell to the Harp of the North :

“Much have I owed thy strains, on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitter was the grief devoured alone,
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress, is thine own.”

“The Egyptian Maid” is distinguished by a soft visionary style of painting, and a stealthy alluring movement, like the rippling of advancing waters, which, I do not remember elsewhere in Wordsworth's writings.

“The Armenian Lady's love” is a fine ballad. The following verses are admirable for delicacy of sentiment and musical sweetness.

“Judge both fugitives with knowledge;
In those old romantic days
Mighty were the soul's commandments
To support, restrain, or raise.

Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle near,
But nothing from their inward selves had they to fear.

“Thought infirm ne’er came between them,
Whether printing desert sands
With accordant steps, or gathering
Forest fruit with social hands;
Or whispering like two reeds that in the cold moonbeam
Bend with the breeze their heads beside a crystal stream.”

The Evening Voluntaries are very beautiful in manner, and full of suggestions. The second is worth extracting as a forcible exhibition of one of Wordsworth’s leading opinions.

“Not in the lucid intervals of life
That come but as a curse to party strife;
Not in some hour when pleasure with a sigh
Of languor, puts his rosy garland by;
Not in the breathing times of that poor slave
Who daily piles up wealth in Mammon’s cave,
Is nature felt, or can be; nor do words
Which practised talent readily affords
Prove that her hands have touched responsive chords.
Nor has her gentle beauty power to move
With genuine rapture and with fervent love
The soul of genius, if he dares to take
Life’s rule from passion craved for passion’s sake;
Untaught that meekness is the cherished bent
Of all the truly great and all the innocent;
But who is innocent? By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature! we are thine,
Through good and evil thine, or just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy,
To all that earth from pensive hearts is stealing,
And heaven is now to gladdened eyes revealing,
Add every charm the universe can show
Through every change its aspects undergo,
Care may be respite, but not repealed;
No perfect cure grows on that bounded field,

Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the peace,
If he through whom alone our conflicts cease,
Our virtuous hopes without relapse advance,
Come not to speed the soul's deliverance ;
To the distempered intellect refuse
His gracious help, or give what we abuse."

But nothing in this volume better deserves attention than "Lines suggested by a Portrait from the pencil of F. Stone," and "Stanzas on the Power of Sound." The first for a refinement and justness of thought rarely surpassed, and the second for a lyric flow, a swelling inspiration, and a width of range, which Wordsworth has never equalled, except in the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," and the noble ode, or rather hymn, to Duty. It should be read entire, and I shall not quote a line. By a singular naiveté the poet has prefixed to these stanzas a table of contents. This distrust of his reader seems to prove that he had risen above his usual level.

What more to the purpose can we say about Wordsworth, except—read him. Like his beloved Nature, to be known he must be loved. His thoughts may be transfused, but never adequately interpreted. Verily,

"To paint *his* being to a grovelling mind,
Were like describing pictures to the blind.

But no one, in whose bosom there yet lives a spark of nature or feeling, need despair of some time sympathizing with him ; since one of the most brilliantly factitious writers of the day, one I should have singled out as seven-fold shielded against his gentle influence, has paid him so feeling a tribute :

" How must thy lone and lofty soul have gone
Exulting on its way, beyond the loud
Self-taunting mockery of the scoffers grown
Tethered and dulled to Nature, in the crowd !
Earth has no nobler, no more moral sight
Than a Great Poet, whom the world disowns,

But stills not, neither angers ; from his height
As from a star, float forth his sphere-like tones ;
He wits not whether the vexed herd may hear
The music wafted to the reverent ear ;
And far man's wrath, or scorn, or heed above,
Smiles down the calm disdain of his majestic love !"

[*From Stanzas addressed by Bulwer to Wordsworth.*]

Read him, then, in your leisure hours, and when you walk into the summer fields you shall find the sky more blue, the flowers more fair, the birds more musical, your minds more awake, and your hearts more tender, for having held communion with him.

I have not troubled myself to point out the occasional affectations of Southey, the frequent obscurity of Coleridge, or the diffuseness of Wordsworth. I should fear to be treated like the critic mentioned in the story Addison quotes from Boccalini, whom Apollo rewarded for his labours by presenting him with a bushel of chaff from which all the wheat had been winnowed. For myself I think that where there is such beauty and strength, we can afford to be silent about slight defects ; and that we refine our tastes more effectually by venerating the grand and lovely, than by detecting the little and mean.

THE MODERN DRAMA.*

A TRAGEDY in five acts!—what student of poetry,—(for, admire, O Posterity, the strange fact, these days of book-craft produce not only inspired singers, and enchanted listeners, but students of poetry,)—what student in this strange sort, I say, has not felt his eye rivetted to this title, as it were written in letters of fire? has not heard it whispered in his secret breast?—In this form alone canst thou express thy thought in the liveliness of life, this success alone should satisfy thy ambition!

Were all these ardours caught from a genuine fire, such as, in favouring eras, led the master geniuses by their successive efforts to perfect this form, till it afforded the greatest advantages in the smallest space, we should be glad to warm and cheer us at a very small blaze. But it is not so. The drama, at least the English drama of our day, shows a reflected light, not a spreading fire. It is not because the touch of genius has roused genius to production, but because the admiration of genius has made talent ambitious, that the harvest is still so abundant.

This is not an observation to which there are no exceptions, some we shall proceed to specify, but those who have, with any care, watched this ambition in their own minds, or analyzed its

* *The Patrician's Daughter*, a tragedy, in five acts, by J. Westland Marston: London: C. Mitchel, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, 1841.

Athelwold, a tragedy in five acts, by W. Smith, Esq.; William Blackwood and Sons. London and Edinburgh, 1842.

Strafford, a tragedy, by John Sterling. London; Edward Moxon, Dover Street, 1843.

results in the works of others, cannot but feel that the drama is not a growth native to this age, and that the numerous grafts produce little fruit, worthy the toil they cost.

'Tis indeed, hard to believe that the drama, once invented, should cease to be a habitual and healthy expression of the mind. It satisfies so fully the wants both of sense and soul, supplying both deep and light excitements, simple, comprehensive, and various, adapted either to great national and religious subjects, or to the private woes of any human breast. The space and the time occupied, the vehicle of expression, fit it equally for the entertainment of an evening, or the closet theme of meditative years. *Ædipus*, *Macbeth*, *Wallenstein*, chain us for the hour, lead us through the age.

Who would not covet this mirror, which, like that of the old wizards, not only reflects, but reproduces the whole range of forms, this key, which unlocks the realms of speculation at the hour when the lights are boldest and the shadows most suggestive, this goblet, whose single sparkling draught is locked from common air by walls of glittering ice? An artful wild, where nature finds no bound to her fertility, while art steadily draws to a whole its linked chain.

Were it in man's power by choosing the best, to attain the best in any particular kind, we would not blame the young poet, if he always chose the drama.

But by the same law of faery which ordains that wishes shall be granted unavailingly to the wisher, no form of art will succeed with him to whom it is the object of deliberate choice. It must grow from his nature in a certain position, as it first did from the general mind in a certain position, and be no garment taken from the shining store to be worn at a banquet, but a real body gradually woven and assimilated from the earth and sky which environed the poet in his youthful years. He may

learn from the old Greek or Hindoo, but he must speak in his mother-tongue.

It was a melancholy praise bestowed on the German Iphigenia, that it was an echo of the Greek mind. O give us something rather than Greece more Grecian, so new, so universal, so individual !

An "After Muse," an appendix period must come to every kind of greatness. It is the criticism of the grandchild upon the inheritance bequeathed by his ancestors. It writes madrigals and sonnets, it makes Brutus wigs, and covers old chairs with damask patch-work, yet happy those who have no affection towards such virtue and entertain their friends with a pipe cut from their own grove, rather than display an ivory lute handed down from the old time, whose sweetness we want the skill to draw forth.

The drama cannot die out: it is too naturally born of certain periods of national development. It is a stream that will sink in one place, only to rise to light in another. As it has appeared successively in Hindostan, Greece, (Rome we cannot count,) England, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, so has it yet to appear in New Holland, New Zealand, and among ourselves, when we too shall be made new by a sunrise of our own, when our population shall have settled into a homogeneous, national life, and we have attained vigour to walk in our own way, make our own world, and leave off copying Europe.

At present our attempts are, for the most part, feebler than those of the British "After Muse," for our play-wrights are not from youth so fancy-fed by the crumbs that fall from the tables of the lords of literature, and having no relish for the berries of our own woods, the roots of our own fields, they are meagre, and their works bodiless ; yet, as they are pupils of the British school, their works need not be classed apart, and I shall mention one or two of the most note-worthy by-and-by.

England boasts one Shakspeare—ah! that alone was more than the share of any one kingdom,—such a king! There Apollo himself tended sheep, and there is not a blade of the field but glows with a peculiar light. At times we are tempted to think him the only genius earth has ever known, so beyond compare is he, when looked at as the myriad-minded; then he seems to sit at the head of the stream of thought, a lone god beside his urn; the minds of others, lower down, feed the current to a greater width, but they come not near him. Happily, in the constructive power, in sweep of soul, others may be named beside him: he is not always all alone.

Historically, such isolation was not possible. Such a being implies a long ancestry, a longer posterity. We discern immortal vigour in the stem that rose to this height.

But his children should not hope to walk in his steps. Prospero gave Miranda a sceptre, not his wand. His genius is too great for his followers, they dwindle in its shadow. They see objects so early with his eyes, they can hardly learn to use their own. “They seek to produce from themselves, but they only reproduce him.”

He is the cause why so much of England’s intellect tends towards the drama, a cause why it so often fails. His works bring despair to genius, they are the bait and the snare of talent.

The impetus he has given, the lustre with which he dazzles, are a chief cause of the dramatic efforts, one cause of failure, but not the only one, for it seems probable that European life tends to new languages, and for a while neglecting this form of representation, would explore the realms of sound and sight, to make to itself other organs, which must for a time supersede the drama.

There is, perhaps, a correspondence between the successions of literary vegetation with those of the earth’s surface, where, if you burn or cut down an ancient wood, the next offering of the

soil will not be in the same kind, but raspberries and purple flowers will succeed the oak, poplars the pine. Thus, beneath the roots of the drama, lay seeds of the historic novel, the romantic epic, which were to take its place to the reader, and for the scene, the oratorios, the opera, and ballet.

Music is the great art of the time. Its dominion is constantly widening, its powers are more profoundly recognized. In the forms it has already evolved, it is equal to representing any subject, can address the entire range of thoughts and emotions. These forms have not yet attained their completeness, and already we discern many others hovering in the vast distances of the Tone-world.

The opera is in this inferior to the drama, that it produces its effects by the double method of dialogue and song. So easy seems it to excite a feeling, and by the orchestral accompaniments to sustain it to the end, that we have not the intellectual exhilaration which accompanies a severer enjoyment. For the same reasons, nothing can surpass the mere luxury of a fine opera.

The oratorio, so great, so perfect in itself, is limited in its subjects; and these, though they must be of the graver class, do not properly admit of tragedy. Minds cannot dwell on special griefs and seeming partial fates, when circling the universe on the wings of the great chorus, sharing the will of the Divine, catching the sense of humanity.

Thus much, as has been given, we demand from music yet another method, simpler and more comprehensive than these. In instrumental music this is given by the symphony, but we want another that shall admit the voice, too, and permit the association of the spectacle.

The ballet seems capable of an infinite perfection. There is no boundary here to the powers of design and expression, if only fit artists can be formed mentally and practically. What could

not a vigorous imagination do, if it had delicate Ariels to enact its plans, with that facility and completeness which pantomime permits ? There is reason to think we shall see the language of the eye, of gesture and attitude carried to a perfection, body made pliant to the inspirations of spirit, as it can hardly be where spoken words are admitted to eke out deficiencies. From our America we hope some form entirely new, not yet to be predicted, while, though the desire for dramatic representation exists, as it always must where there is any vigorous life, the habit of borrowing is so pervasive, that in the lately peopled prairies of the West, where civilization is but five years old, we find the young people acting plays, indeed, and "on successive nights to overflowing audiences,"—but what ? Some drama, ready made to hand by the fortunes of Boon, or the defeats of Black Hawk ? Not at all, but—Tamerlane and the like—Bombastes Furioso, and King Cambyses vein to the "storekeepers" and labourers of republican America.

In this connection let me mention the drama of Metamora, a favourite on the boards in our cities, which, if it have no other merit, yields something that belongs to this region, Forrest having studied for this part the Indian gait and expression with some success. He is naturally adapted to the part by the strength and dignity of his person and outline.

To return to Britain.

The stage was full of life, after the drama began to decline, and the actors, whom Shakspeare should have had to represent his parts, were born, after his departure, from the dignity given to the profession by the existence of such occasion for it. And again, out of the existence of such actors rose hosts of playwrights, who wrote not to embody the spirit of life, in forms shifting and interwoven in the space of a spectacle, but to give room for display of the powers of such and such actors. A little higher stood those, who excelled in invention of plots, preg-

nant crises, or brilliant point of dialogue, but both degraded the drama, Sheridan scarcely less than Cibber; and Garrick and the Kembles, while they lighted up the edifice, left slow fire for its destruction.

A partial stigma rests, as it has always rested, on the profession of the actor. At first flash, we marvel why. Why do not men bow in reverence before those, who hold the mirror up to nature, and not to common nature, but to her most exalted, profound, and impassioned hours?

Some have imputed this to an association with the trickeries and coarse illusions of the scene, with pasteboard swords and crowns, mock-thunder and tinfoil moonshine. But in what profession are not mummeries practised, and ludicrous accessories interposed? Are the big wig of the barrister, the pen behind the ear of the merchant, so reverend in our eyes?

Some say that it is because we pay the actor for amusing us; but we pay other men for all kinds of service, without feeling them degraded thereby. And is he, who has administered an exhilarating draught to my mind, in less pleasing associations there, than he who has administered a febrifuge to the body?

Again, that the strong excitements of the scene and its motley life dispose to low and sensual habits.

But the instances, where all such temptations have been resisted, are so many, compared with the number engaged, that every one must feel that here, as elsewhere, the temptation is determined by the man.

Why is it then that to the profession, which numbers in its ranks Shakspeare and Moliere, which is dignified by such figures as Siddons, Talma, and Macready, respect is less willingly conceded than applause? Why is not discrimination used here as elsewhere? Is it the same thing to act the "Lady in Comus," and the Lady in "She stoops to Conquer," Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, and Sir Lucius O'Trigger? Is not the actor, accord-

ing to his sphere, a great artist or a poor buffoon, just as a lawyer may become a chancellor of the three kingdoms, or a base pettifogger ?

Prejudice on this score, must be the remnant of a barbarism which saw minstrels the pensioned guests at barons' tables, and murdered Correggio beneath a sack of copper. As man better understands that his positive existence is only effigy of the ideal, and that nothing is useful or honourable which does not advance the reign of Beauty, Art and Artists rank constantly higher, as one with Religion. Let Artists also know their calling, let the Actor live and die a Roman Actor,* more than Raphael shall be

* We may be permitted to copy, in this connection, the fine plea of Massinger's "Roman Actor."

PARIS. If desire of honor was the base
On which the building of the Roman empire
Was raised up to this height; if, to inflame
The noble youth, with an ambitious heat,
To endure the posts of danger, nay, of death,
To be thought worthy the triumphal wreath,
By glorious undertakings, may deserve
Reward, or favor from the commonwealth;
Actors may put in for as large a share,
As all the sects of the philosophers:
They with cold precepts (perhaps seldom read)
Deliver what an honorable thing
The active virtue is: but does that fire
The blood, or swell the veins with emulation,
To be both good and great, equal to that
Which is presented on our theatres?
Let a good actor, in a lofty scene,
Show great Alcides, honored in the sweat
Of his twelve labors; or a bold Camillus,
Forbidding Rome to be redeemed with gold
From the insulting Gauls, or Scipio,
After his victories, imposing tribute
On conquered Carthage; if done to the life,

elected Cardinals, and of a purer church ; and it shall be ere long remembered as dream and fable, that the representative of "*my Cid*" could not rest in consecrated ground.

As if they saw their dangers, and their glories,
And did partake with them in their rewards,
All that have any spark of Roman in them,
The slothful arts laid by, contend to be
Like those they see presented.

SECOND SENATOR. He has put
The consuls to their whisper.

PARIS. But 'tis urged
That we corrupt youth, and traduce superiors.
When do we bring a vice upon the stage,
That does go off unpunished ? Do we teach,
By the success of wicked undertakings,
Others to tread in their forbidden steps ?
We show no arts of Lydian panderism,
Corinthian poisons, Persian flatteries,
But mulcted so in the conclusion, that
Even those spectators, that were so inclined,
Go home changed men. And for traducing such
That are above us, publishing to the world
Their secret crimes, we are as innocent
As such as are born dumb. When we present
An heir, that does conspire against the life
Of his dear parent, numbering every hour
He lives, as tedious to him ; if there be
Among the auditors one, whose conscience tells him
He is of the same mould,—WE CANNOT HELP IT.
Or, bringing on the stage a loose adulteress,
That does maintain the riotous expense
Of her licentious paramour, yet suffers
The lawful pledges of a former bed
To starve the while for hunger ; if a matron,
However great in fortune, birth, or titles,
Cry out, 'Tis writ for me !—WE CANNOT HELP IT.
Or, when a covetous man's expressed, whose wealth

In Germany these questions have already been fairly weighed, and those who read the sketches of her great actors, as given by Tieck, know that there, at least, they took with the best minds of their age and country their proper place.

And who, that reads Joanna Baillie's address to Mrs. Siddons, but feels that the fate, which placed his birth in another age from her, has robbed him of full sense of a kind of greatness whose absence none other can entirely supply.

* * * * *

The impassioned changes of thy beauteous face,
Thy arms impetuous tost, thy robe's wide flow,
And the dark tempest gathered on thy brow,
What time thy flashing eye and lip of scorn
Down to the dust thy mimic foes have borne ;
Remorseful musings sunk to deep dejection,
The fixed and yearning looks of strong affection ;

Arithmetic cannot number, and whose lordships
A falcon in one day cannot fly over ;
Yet he so sordid in his mind, so griping
As not to afford himself the necessaries
To maintain life, if a patrician,
(Though honored with a consulship) find himself
Touched to the quick in this,—WE CANNOT HELP IT.
Or, when we show a judge that is corrupt,
And will give up his sentence, as he favors
The person, not the cause; saving the guilty
If of his faction, and as oft condemning
The innocent, out of particular spleen ;
If any in this reverend assembly,
Nay, even yourself, my lord, that are the image
Of absent Cæsar, feel something in your bosom
That puts you in remembrance of things past,
Or things intended,—'TIS NOT IN US TO HELP IT.
I have said, my lord, and now, as you find cause,
Or censure us, or free us with applause.

The actioned turmoil of a bosom rending,
Where pity, love, and honor, are contending;

* * * * *

Thy varied accents, rapid, fitful, slow,
Loud rage, and fear's snatch'd whisper, quick and low,
The burst of stifled love, the wail of grief,
And tones of high command, full, solemn, brief;
The change of voice and emphasis that threw
Light on obscurity, and brought to view
Distinctions nice, when grave or comic mood,
Or mingled humors, terse and new, elude
Common perception, as earth's smallest things
To size and form the vesting hoar-frost brings.

* * * * *

* * * Thy light * * * * *
* from the mental world can never fade,
Till all, who've seen thee, in the grave are laid.
Thy graceful form still moves in nightly dreams
And what thou wert to the rapt sleeper seems,
While feverish fancy oft doth fondly trace
Within her curtained couch thy wondrous face;
Yea, and to many a wight, bereft and lone,
In musing hours, though all to thee unknown,
Soothing his early course of good and ill,
With all thy potent charm thou actest still.

Perhaps the effect produced by Mrs. Siddons is still more vividly shown in the character of Jane de Montfort, which seems modelled from her. We have no such lotus cup to drink. Mademoiselle Rachel indeed seems to possess as much electric force as Mrs. Siddons, but not the same imposing individuality. The Kembles and Talma were cast in the royal mint to commemorate the victories of genius. That Mrs. Siddons even added somewhat of congenial glory to Shakspeare's own conceptions, those who compare the engravings of her in *Lady Macbeth* and *Catherine of Arragon*, with the picture drawn in their own minds from acquaintance with these beings in the original, cannot doubt; the sun is reflected with new glory in the majestic river.

Yet, under all these disadvantages there have risen up often, in England, and even in our own country, actors who gave a reason for the continued existence of the theatre, who sustained the ill-educated, flimsy troop, which commonly fills it, and provoked both the poet and the playwright to turn their powers in that direction.

The plays written for them, though no genuine dramas, are not without value as spectacle, and the opportunity, however lame, gives freer play to the actor's powers, than would the simple recitation, by which some have thought any attempt at acting whole plays should be superseded. And under the starring system it is certainly less painful, on the whole, to see a play of Knowles's than one of Shakspeare's; for the former, with its frigid diction, unnatural dialogue, and academic figures, affords scope for the actor to produce striking effects, and to show a knowledge of the passions, while all the various beauties of Shakspeare are traduced by the puppets who should repeat them, and the being closer to nature, brings no one figure into such bold relief as is desirable when there is only one actor. *Virginius*, *the Hunchback*, *Metamora*, are plays quite good enough for the stage at present; and they are such as those who attend the representations of plays will be very likely to write.

Another class of dramas are those written by the scholars and thinkers, whose tastes have been formed, and whose ambition kindled, by acquaintance with the genuine English dramatists. These again may be divided into two sorts. One, those who have some idea to bring out, which craves a form more lively than the essay, more compact than the narrative, and who therefore adopt (if Hibernicism may be permitted) the dialogued monologue to very good purpose. Such are *Festus*, *Paracelsus*, *Coleridge's Remorse*, *Shelley's Cenci*; Miss Baillie's plays, though meant for action, and with studied attempts to vary them by the lighter shades of common nature, which, from her want

of lively power, have no effect, except to break up the interest, and Byron's are of the same class ; they have no present life, no action, no slight natural touches, no delicate lines, as of one who paints his portrait from the fact ; their interest is poetic, nature apprehended in her spirit ; philosophic, actions traced back to their causes ; but not dramatic, nature reproduced in actual presence. This, as a form for the closet, is a very good one, and well fitted to the genius of our time. Whenever the writers of such fail, it is because they have the stage in view, instead of considering the *dramatis personæ* merely as names for classes of thoughts. Somewhere betwixt these and the mere acting plays stand such as Maturin's Bertram, Talfourd's Ion, and (now before me) Longfellow's Spanish Student. Bertram is a good acting play, that is, it gives a good opportunity to one actor, and its painting, though coarse, is effective. Ion, also, can be acted, though its principal merit is in the nobleness of design, and in details it is too elaborate for the scene. Still it does move and melt, and it is honorable to us that a piece constructed on so high a *motive*, whose tragedy is so much nobler than the customary forms of passion, can act on audiences long unfamiliar with such religion. The Spanish Student might also be acted, though with no great effect, for there is little movement in the piece, or development of character ; its chief merit is in the graceful expression of single thoughts or fancies ; as here,

All the means of action
The shapeless masses, the materials,
Lie every where about us. What we need
Is the celestial fire to change the flint
Into transparent crystal, bright and clear.
That fire is genius ! The rude peasant sits
At evening in his smoky cot, and draws
With charcoal uncouth figures on the wall.
The son of genius comes, foot-sore with travel,
And begs a shelter from the inclement night.

He takes the charcoal from the peasant's hand,
And by the magic of his touch at once
Transfigured, all its hidden virtues shine,
And in the eyes of the astonished clown,
It gleams a diamond. Even thus transformed,
Rude popular traditions and old tales
Shine as immortal poems, at the touch
Of some poor houseless, homeless, wandering bard,
Who had but a night's lodging for his pains.
But there are brighter dreams than those of fame,
Which are the dreams of love! Out of the heart
Rises the bright ideal of these dreams,
As from some woodland fount a spirit rises
And sinks again into its silent deeps,
Ere the enamoured knight can touch her robe!
'T is this ideal, that the soul of man,
Like the enamoured knight beside the fountain,
Waits for upon the margin of life's stream;
Waits to behold her rise from the dark waters
Clad in a mortal shape! Alas! how many
Must wait in vain! The stream flows evermore,
But from its silent deeps no spirit rises.

Or here,

I will forget her! All dear recollections
Pressed in my heart, like flowers within a book,
Shall be torn out, and scattered to the winds;
I will forget her! But perhaps hereafter,
When she shall learn how heartless is the world,
A voice within her will repeat my name,
And she will say, 'He was indeed my friend.'

Passages like these would give great pleasure in the chaste and carefully-shaded recitation of Macready or Miss Tree. The style of the play is, throughout, elegant and simple. Neither the plot nor characters can boast any originality, but the one is woven with skill and taste, the others very well drawn, for so slight handling.

We had purposed in this place to notice some of the modern

French plays, which hold about the same relation to the true drama, but this task must wait a more convenient season.

One of the plays at the head of this notice also comes in here, *The Patrician's Daughter*, which, though a failure as a tragedy, from an improbability in the plot, and a want of power to touch the secret springs of passion, yet has the merits of genteel comedy in the unstrained and flowing dialogue, and dignity in the conception of character. A piece like this pleases, if only by the atmosphere of intellect and refinement it breathes.

But a third class, of higher interest, is the historical, such as may well have been suggested to one whose youth was familiar with Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar*, and *Kings of England*. Who that wears in his breast an English heart, and has feeling to appreciate the capabilities of the historic drama, but must burn with desire to use the occasions offered in profusion by the chronicles of England and kindred nations, to adorn the inherited halls with one tapestry more. It is difficult to say why such an attempt should fail, yet it does fail, and each effort in this kind shows plainly that the historic novel, not the historic drama, is the form appropriate to the genius of our day. Yet these failures come so near success, the spent arrows show so bold and strong a hand in the marksman, that we would not, for much, be without them.

First and highest in this list comes *Philip Van Artevelde*, of which we can say that it bears new fruit on the twentieth reading. At first it fell rather coldly on the mind, coming as it did, not as the flower of full flushed being, but with the air of an experiment made to verify a theory. It came with wrinkled critic's brow, consciously antagonistic to a tendency of the age, and we looked on it with cold critic's eye, unapt to weep or glow at its bidding. But, on closer acquaintance, we see that this way of looking, though induced by the author, is quite unjust. It is really a noble work that teaches us, a genuine growth that makes us grow, a reflex of nature from the calm depths of a large soul.

The grave and comprehensive character of the ripened man, of him whom fire, and light, and earth have tempered to an intelligent delegate of humanity, has never been more justly felt, rarely more life-like painted, than by this author. The Flemish blood and the fiery soul are both understood. Philip stands among his compatriots the man mature, not premature or alien. He is what they should be, his life the reconciling word of his age and nation, the thinking head of an unintelligent and easily distempered body, a true king. The accessories are all in keeping, saplings of the same wood. The eating, drinking, quarrelling citizens, the petulant sister, the pure and lovely bride, the sorrowful and stained, but deep-souled mistress, the monk, much a priest, but more a man, all belong to him and all require him. We cannot think of any part of this piece without its centre, and this fact proclaims it a great work of art. It is great, the conception of the swelling tide of fortune, on which this figure is upborne serenely eminent, of the sinking of that tide with the same face rising from the depths, veiled with the same cloud as the heavens, in its sadness calmer yet. Too wise and rich a nature he, too intelligent of the teachings of earth and heaven to be a stoic, but too comprehensive, too poetic, to be swayed, though he might be moved, by chance or passion. Some one called him Philip the Imperturbable, but his greatness is, that he is *not* imperturbable, only, as the author announces, “not passion’s slave.” The gods would not be gods, if they were ignorant, or impassive; they must be able to see all that men see, only from a higher point of view.

Such pictures make us willing to live in the widest sense, to bear all that may be borne, for we see that virgin gold may be fit to adorn a scabbard, but the good blade is made of tempered steel.

Justice has not been done by the critics to the admirable conduct of the Second Part, because our imaginations were at first so struck by the full length picture of the hero in the conquering

days of the First Part, and it was painful to see its majesty veiled with crape, its towering strength sink to ruins in the second. Then there are more grand and full passages in the First which can be detached and recollected ; as,

We have not time to mourn ; the worse for us,
He that lacks time to mourn lacks time to mend ;
Eternity mourns that. 'T is an ill cure
For life's worst ills, to have no time to feel them.
Where sorrow's held intrusive and turned out,
There wisdom will not enter, nor true power,
Nor aught that dignifies humanity.

That beginning,

To bring a cloud upon the summer day,

or this famous one,

Nor do I now despond, &c.

or the fine scene between Clara, Van Artevelde, and Father John, where she describes the death scene at Sesenheim's, beginning,

Much hast thou merited, my sister dear.

The second part must be taken as a whole, the dark cloud widening and blackening as it advances, while ghastly flashes of presage come more and more frequent as the daylight diminishes. But there is far more fervor of genius than in the First, showing a mind less possessing, more possessed by, the subject, and finer touches of nature. Van Artevelde's dignity overpowers us more, as he himself feels it less ; as in the acceptance of Father John's reproof.

VAN ARTEVELDE.

Father John !

Though peradventure fallen in your esteem,
I humbly ask your blessing, as a man,
That having passed for more in your repute
Than he could justify, should be content,
Not with his state, but with the judgment true

That to the lowly level of his state
Brings down his reputation.

FATHER JOHN.

Oh, my son !
High as you stand, I will not strain my eyes
To see how higher still you stood before.
God's blessing be upon you. Fare you well.

[*Exit.*]

ARTEVELDE.

The old man weeps.

But he reverts at once to the topic of his thought,
Should England play me false, &c.

as he always does, for a mind so great, so high, that it cannot fail to look over and around any one object, any especial emotion, returns to its habitual mood with an ease of which shallow and excitable natures cannot conceive. Thus his reflection, after he has wooed Elena, is not that of heartlessness, but of a deep heart.

How little flattering is a woman's love !

And is in keeping with

I know my course,
And be it armies, cities, people, priests,
That quarrel with my love, wise men or fools,
Friends, foes, or factions, they may swear their oaths,
And make their murmur ; rave, and fret, and fear,
Suspect, admonish ; they but waste their rage,
Their wits, their words, their counsel ; here I stand
Upon the deep foundations of my faith,
To this fair outcast plighted ; and the storm
That princes from their palaces shakes out,
Though it should turn and head me, should not strain
The seeming silken texture of this tie.

And not less with

Pain and grief
Are transitory things no less than joy ;

And though they leave us not the men we were,
Yet they do leave us.

With the admirable passages that follow.

The delicate touches, with which Elena is made to depict her own character, move us more than Artevelde's most beautiful description of Adriana.

I have been much unfortunate, my lord,
I would not love again.

Shakspeare could not mend the collocation of those words.

When he is absent I am full of thought,
And fruitful in expression inwardly,
And fresh, and free, and cordial, is the flow
Of my ideal and unheard discourse,
Calling him in my heart endearing names,
Familiarly fearless. But alas !
No sooner is he present than my thoughts
Are breathless and bewitched, and stunted so
In force and freedom, that I ask myself
Whether I think at all, or feel, or live,
So senseless am I.

Would that I were merry !

Mirth have I valued not before; but now
What would I give to be the laughing front
Of gay imaginations ever bright,
And sparkling fantasies ! Oh, all I have,
Which is not nothing, though I prize it not;
My understanding soul, my brooding sense,
My passionate fancy, and the gift of gifts
Dearest to woman, which deflowering Time,
Slow ravisher, from clenchedest fingers wrings,
My corporal beauty would I barter now
For such an antic and exulting spirit
As lives in lively women.

Your grave, and wise,
And melancholy men, if they have souls,

As commonly they have, susceptible
Of all impressions, lavish most their love
Upon the blithe and sportive, and on such
As yield their want, and chase their sad excess,
With jocund salutations, nimble talk,
And buoyant bearing.

All herself is in the line,

Which is not nothing, though I prize it not.

And in her song,

Down lay in a nook my lady's brach.

This song I have heard quoted, and applied in such a way as to show that the profound meaning, so simply expressed, has sometimes been understood.

See with what a strain of reflection Van Artevelde greets the news that makes sure his overthrow.

It is strange, yet true,
That doubtful knowledge travels with a speed
Miraculous, which certain cannot match ;
I know not why, when this or that has chanced,
The smoke should come before the flash ; yet 't is so.

The creative power of a soul of genius, is shown by bringing out the poetic sweetness of Van Artevelde, more and more, as the scene assumes a gloomier hue. The melancholy music of his speech penetrates the heart more and more up to the close.

The gibbous moon was in a wan decline,
And all was silent as a sick man's chamber,
Mixing its small beginnings with the dregs
Of the pale moonshine, and a few faint stars,
The cold uncomfortable daylight dawned ;
And the white tents, topping a low-ground fog,
Showed like a fleet becalmed.

At the close of the vision :

And midmost in the eddy and the whirl,
My own face saw I, which was pale and calm
As death could make it,—then the vision passed,

And I perceived the river and the bridge,
 The mottled sky, and horizontal moon,
 The distant camp and all things as they were.

* * * * *

Elena, think not that I stand in need
 Of false encouragement; I have my strength,
 Which, though it lie not in the sanguine mood,
 Will answer my occasions. To yourself,
 Though to none other, I at times present
 The gloomiest thoughts that gloomy truths inspire,
 Because I love you. But I need no prop!
 Nor could I find it in a tinsel show
 Of prosperous surmise. Before the world
 I wear a cheerful aspect, not so false
 As for your lover's solace you put on;
 Nor in my closet does the oil run low,
 Or the light flicker.

ELENA.

Lo, now! you are angry
 Because I try to cheer you.

VAN ARTEVELDE.

No, my love,
 Not angry; that I never was with you;
 But as I deal not falsely with my own,
 So would I wish the heart of her I love,
 To be both true and brave; nor self-beguiled,
 Nor putting on disguises for my sake,
 As though I faltered. I have anxious hours;
 As who in like extremities has not?
 But I have something stable here within,
 Which bears their weight.

In the last scenes :

CECILE.

She will be better soon, my lord.

VAN ARTEVELDE.

Say worse;
 'T is better for her to be thus bereft.
 One other kiss on that bewitching brow,

Pale hemisphere of charms. Unhappy girl!
 The curse of beauty was upon thy birth,
 Nor love bestowed a blessing. Fare thee well!

How clear his voice sounds at the very last.

The rumor ran that I was hurt to death,
 And then they staggered. Lo! we're flying all!
 Mount, mount, old man; at least let one be saved!
 Roosdyk! Vauclaire! the gallant and the kind!
 Who shall inscribe your merits on your tombs?
 May mine tell nothing to the world but this:
 That never did that prince or leader live,
 Who had more loyal or more loving friends!
 Let it be written that fidelity
 Could go no farther. Mount, old friend, and fly!

VAN RYK.

With you, my lord, not else. A fear-struck throng,
 Comes rushing from Mount Dorre. Sir, cross the bridge.

ARTEVELDE.

The bridge! my soul abhors—but cross it thou;
 And take this token to my love, Van Ryk;
 Fly, for my sake in hers, and take her hence!
 It is my last command. See her conveyed
 To Ghent by Olsen, or what safer road
 Thy prudence shall descry. This do, Van Ryk.
 Lo! now they pour upon us like a flood!—
 Thou that didst never disobey me yet—
 This last good office render me. Begone!
 Fly whilst the way is free.

What commanding sweetness in the utterance of the name, Van Ryk, and what a weight of tragedy in the broken sentence which speaks of the fatal bridge. These are the things that actors rarely give us, the very passages to which it would be their vocation to do justice; saying out those tones we divine from the order of the words.

Yet Talma's *Pas encore* set itself to music in the mind of the

hearer ; and *Zara, you weep*, was so spoken as to melt the whole French nation into that one moment.

Elena's sob of anguish :

Arouse yourself, sweet lady : fly with me,
I pray you hear ; it was his last command
That I should take you hence to Ghent by Olsen.

ELENA.

I cannot go on foot.

VAN RYK.

No, lady, no,
You shall not need ; horses are close at hand,
Let me but take you hence. I pray you come.

ELENA.

Take *him* then too.

VAN RYK.

The enemy is near,
In hot pursuit ; we cannot take the body.

ELENA.

The body ! Oh !

In this place Miss Kemble alone would have had force of passion to represent her, who

Flung that long funereal note
Into the upper sky ?

Though her acting was not refined enough by intellect and culture for the more delicate lineaments of the character. She also would have given its expression to the unintelligent, broken-hearted,

I cannot go on foot.

The body—yes, that temple could be so deserted by its god, that men could call it so ! That form so instinct with rich gifts, that baseness and sloth seemed mere names in its atmosphere, could lie on the earth as unable to vindicate its rights, as any other clod. The exclamation of Elena, better bespoke the tragedy of this fact, than any eulogium of a common observer, though that of Burgundy is fitly worded.

Dire rebel though he was,
Yet with a noble nature and great gifts
Was he endowed: courage, discretion, wit,
An equal temper and an ample soul,
Rock-bound and fortified against assaults
Of transitory passion, but below
Built on a surging subterraneous fire,
That stirred and lifted him to high attempts,
So prompt and capable, and yet so calm;
He nothing lacked in sovereignty but the right,
Nothing in soldiership except good fortune.

That *was* the grandeur of the character, that its calmness had nothing to do with slowness of blood, but was "built on a surging subterranean fire."

Its magnanimity is shown with a fine simplicity. To blame one's self is easy, to condemn one's own changes and declensions of character and life painful, but inevitable to a deep mind. But to bear well the blame of a lesser nature, unequal to seeing what the fault grows from, is not easy; to take blame as Van Artevelde does, so quietly, indifferent from whence truth comes, so it be truth, is a trait seen in the greatest only.

ELENA.

Too anxious, Artevelde,
And too impatient are you grown of late;
You used to be so calm and even-minded,
That nothing ruffled you.

ARTEVELDE.

I stand reproved;
'T is time and circumstance that tries us all;
And they that temperately take their start,
And keep their souls indifferently sedate,
Through much of good and evil at the last,
May find the weakness of their hearts thus tried.
My cause appears more precious than it did
In its triumphant days.

I have ventured to be the more lavish of extracts that, although

the publication of Philip Van Artevelde at once placed Mr. Taylor in the second rank of English poets, a high meed of glory, when we remember who compose the first, we seldom now hear the poem mentioned, or a line quoted from it, though it is a work which might, from all considerations, well make a part of habitual reading, and habitual thought. Mr. Taylor has since published another dramatic poem, "Edwin the Fair," whose excellencies, though considerable, are not of the same commanding character with those of its predecessor. He was less fortunate in his subject. There is no great and noble figure in the foreground on which to concentrate the interest, from which to distribute the lights. Neither is the spirit of an era seized with the same power. The figures are modern English under Saxon names, and affect us like a Boston face, tricked out in the appurtenances of Goethe's Faust. Such a character as Dunstan's should be subordinated in a drama ; its interest is that of intellectual analysis, mere feelings it revolts. The main character of the piece should attract the feelings, and we should be led to analysis, to understand, not to excuse its life.

There are, however, fine passages, as profound, refined, and expressed with the same unstrained force and purity, as those in Philip Van Artevelde.

Athelwold, another of the tragedies at the head of this notice, takes up some of the same characters a few years later. Without poetic depth, or boldness of conception, it yet boasts many beauties from the free talent, and noble feelings of the author. Athelwold is the best sketch in it, and the chief interest consists in his obstinate rejection of Elfrida, whose tardy penitence could no way cancel the wrong, her baseness of nature did his faith. This is worked up with the more art, that there is justice in her plea, but love, shocked from its infinity, could not stop short of despair. Here deep feeling rises to poetry.

Dunstan and Edgar are well drawn sketches, but show not the subtle touches of a life-like treatment.

This, we should think, as well as the Patrician's Daughter, might be a good acting play.

We come now to the work which affords the most interesting theme for this notice, from its novelty, its merits, and its subject, which is taken from that portion of English history with which we are most closely bound, the time preceding the Commonwealth.

Its author, Mr. Sterling, has many admirers among us, drawn to him by his productions, both in prose and verse, which for a time enriched the pages of Blackwood. Some of these have been collected into a small volume, which has been republished in this country.

These smaller pieces are of very unequal merit ; but the best among them are distinguished by vigor of conception and touch, by manliness and modesty of feeling, by a depth of experience, rare in these days of babbling criticism and speculation. His verse does not flow or soar with the highest lyrical inspiration, neither does he enrich us by a large stock of original images, but for grasp and picturesque presentation of his subject, for frequent bold and forceful passages, and the constantly fresh breath of character, we know few that could be named with him. The Sexton's Daughter is the longest and best known, but not the best of the minor poems. It has, however, in a high degree, the merits we have mentioned. The yew tree makes a fine centre to the whole picture. The tale is told in too many words, the homely verse becomes garrulous, but the strong, pure feeling of natural relations endears them all.

His Aphrodite is fitly painted, and we should have dreamed it so from all his verse.

* * * * *

The high immortal queen from heaven,
The calm Olympian face;

Eyes pure from human tear or smile,
Yet ruling all on earth,
And limbs whose garb of golden air
Was Dawn's primeval birth.

With tones like music of a lyre,
Continuous, piercing, low,
The sovran lips began to speak,
Spoke on in liquid flow,
It seemed the distant ocean's voice,
Brought near and shaped to speech,
But breathing with a sense beyond
What words of man may reach.

Weak child! Not I the puny power
Thy wish would have me be,
A roseleaf floating with the wind
Upon a summer sea.
If such thou need'st, go range the fields,
And hunt the gilded fly,
And when it mounts above thy head,
Then lay thee down and die.

The spells which rule in earth and stars,
Each mightiest thought that lives,
Are stronger than the kiss a child
In sudden fancy gives.
They cannot change, or fail, or fade,
Nor deign o'er aught to sway,
Too weak to suffer and to strive,
And tired while still 't is day.

And thou with better wisdom learn
The ancient lore to scan,
Which tells that first in Ocean's breast
Thy rule o'er all began;
And know that not in breathless noon
Upon the glassy main,
The power was born that taught the world
To hail her endless reign.

The winds were loud, the waves were high,
In drear eclipse the sun
Was crouched within the caves of heaven,
And light had scarce begun ;
The Earth's green front lay drowned below,
And Death and Chaos fought
O'er all the tumult vast of things
Not yet to severance brought.

'T was then that spoke the fateful voice,
And 'mid the huge uproar,
Above the dark I sprang to life,
A good unhoped before.
My tresses waved along the sky,
And stars leapt out around,
And earth beneath my feet arose,
And hid the pale profound.
A lamp amid the night, a feast
That ends the strife of war,
To wearied mariners a port,
To fainting limbs a car,
To exiled men the friendly roof,
To mourning hearts the lay,
To him who long has roamed by night
The sudden dawn of day.
All these are mine, and mine the bliss
That visits breasts in woe,
And fills with wine the cup that once
With tears was made to flow.
Nor question thou the help that comes
From Aphrodite's hand ;
For madness dogs the bard who doubts
Whate'er the gods command.

Alfred the Harper has the same strong picture and noble beat of wing. One line we have heard so repeated by a voice, that could give it its full meaning, that we should be very grateful to the poet for that alone.

Still lives the song though Regnar dies.

Dædalus we must quote.

DÆDALUS.

1.

Wail for Dædalus all that is fairest !
All that is tuneful in air or wave !
Shapes, whose beauty is truest and rarest,
Haunt with your lamps and spells his grave !

2.

Statues, bend your heads in sorrow,
Ye that glance 'mid ruins old,
That know not a past, nor expect a morrow,
On many a moonlight Grecian wold !

3.

By sculptured cave and speaking river,
Thee, Dædalus, oft the Nymphs recall ;
The leaves with a sound of winter quiver,
Murmur thy name, and withering fall.

4.

Yet are thy visions in soul the grandest
Of all that crowd on the tear-dimmed eye,
Though, Dædalus, thou no more commandest
New stars to that ever-widening sky.

5.

Ever thy phantoms arise before us,
Our loftier brothers, but one in blood ;
By bed and table they lord it o'er us,
With looks of beauty and words of Good.

6.

Calmly they show us mankind victorious
O'er all that's aimless, blind, and base ;
Their presence has made our nature glorious,
Unveiling our night's illumined face.

7.

Thy toil has won them a godlike quiet,
Thou hast wrought their path to a lovely sphere ;
Their eyes to peace rebuke our riot,
And shape us a home of refuge here.

8.

For Dædalus breathed in them his spirit;
 In them their sire his beauty sees ;
 We too, a younger brood, inherit
 The gifts and blessing bestowed on these.

9.

But ah ! their wise and graceful seeming
 Recalls the more that the sage is gone ;
 Weeping we wake from deceitful dreaming,
 And find our voiceless chamber lone.

10.

Dædalus, thou from the twilight fleest,
 Which thou with visions hast made so bright ;
 And when no more those shapes thou seest,
 Wanting thine eye they lose their light.

11.

E'en in the noblest of Man's creations,
 Those fresh worlds round this old of ours,
 When the seer is gone, the orphaned nations
 See but the tombs of perished powers.

12.

Wail for Dædalus, Earth and Ocean !
 Stars and Sun, lament for him !
 Ages, quake in strange commotion !
 All ye realms of life be dim !

13.

Wail for Dædalus, awful voices,
 From earth's deep centre Mankind appall !
 Seldom ye sound, and then Death rejoices,
 For he knows that then the mightiest fall.

Also the following, whose measure seems borrowed from Goethe, and is worthy of its source. We insert a part of it.

THE WOODED MOUNTAINS.

Woodland mountains in your leafy walks,
 Shadows of the Past and Future blend ;
 'Mid your verdant windings flits or stalks
 Many a loved and disembodied friend.

With your oaks and pine-trees, ancient brood,
Spirits rise above the wizard soil,
And with these I rove amid the wood ;
Man may dream on earth no less than toil.

Shapes that seem my kindred meet the ken ;
Gods and heroes glimmer through the shade ;
Ages long gone by from haunts of men
Meet me here in rocky dell and glade.

There the Muses, touched with gleams of light,
Warble yet from yonder hill of trees,
And upon the huge and mist-clad height
Fancy sage a clear Olympus sees.

'Mid yon utmost peaks the elder powers
Still unshaken hold their fixed abode,
Fates primeval throned in airy towers,
That with morning sunshine never glowed.

Deep below, amid a hell of rocks,
Lies the Cyclops, and the Dragon coils,
Heaving with the torrent's weary shocks,
That round the untrodden region boils.

But more near to where our thought may climb,
In a mossy, leaf-clad, Druid ring,
Three gray shapes, prophetic Lords of Time,
Homer, Dante, Shakspeare, sit and sing.

Each in his turn his descant frames aloud,
Mingling new and old in ceaseless birth,
While the Destinies hear amid their cloud,
And accordant mould the flux of earth.

Oh ! ye trees that wave and glisten round,
Oh ! ye waters gurgling down the dell,
Pulses throb in every sight and sound,
Living Nature's more than magic spell.

Soon amid the vista still and dim,
Knights, whom youth's high heart forgetteth not,
Each with scars and shadowy helmet grim,
Amadis, Orlando, Launcelot.

Stern they pass along the twilight green,
While within the tangled wood's recess
Some lorn damsel sits, lamenting keen,
With a voice of tuneful amorousness.

Clad in purple weed, with pearly crown,
And with golden hairs that waving play,
Fairest earthly sight for King and Clown,
Oriana or Angelica.

But in sadder nooks of deeper shade,
Forms more subtle lurk from human eye,
Each cold Nymph, the rock or fountain's maid,
Crowned with leaves that sunbeams never dry.

And while on and on I wander, still
Passed the plashing streamlet's glance and foam,
Hearing oft the wild-bird pipe at will,
Still new openings lure me still to roam.

In this hollow smooth by May-tree walled,
White and breathing now with fragrant flower,
Lo! the fairy tribes to revel called,
Start in view as fades the evening hour.

Decked in rainbow roof of gossamer,
And with many a sparkling jewel bright,
Rose-leaf faces, dew-drop eyes are there,
Each with gesture fine of gentle sprite.

Gay they woo, and dance, and feast, and sing,
Elfin chants and laughter fill the dell,
As if every leaf around should ring
With its own aerial emerald bell.

But for man 'tis ever sad to see
Joys like his that he must not partake,
'Mid a separate world, a people's glee,
In whose hearts his heart no joy could wake.

Fare ye well, ye tiny race of elves;
May the moonbeam ne'er behold your tomb;
Ye are happiest childhood's other selves,
Bright to you be always evening's gloom.

And thou, mountainrealm of ancient wood,
Where my feet and thoughts have strayed so long,
Now thy old gigantic brotherhood
With a ghostlier vastness round me throng.

Mound, and cliff, and crag, that none may scale
With your serried trunks and wrestling boughs,
Like one living presence ye prevail,
And o'erhang me with Titanian brows.

In your Being's mighty depth of Power,

Mine is lost and melted all away.

In your forms involved I seem to tower,
And with you am spread in twilight grey.

In this knotted stem whereon I lean,
And the dome above of countless leaves,
Twists and swells, and frowns a life unseen,
That my life with it resistless weaves.

Yet, O nature, less is all of thine
Than thy borrowings from our human breast ;
Thou, O God, hast made thy child divine,
And for him this world thou hallowest.

The Rose and the Gauntlet we much admire as a ballad, and the tale is told in fewest words, and by a single picture ; but we have not room for it here. In Lady Jane Grey, though this again is too garrulous, the picture of the princess at the beginning is fine, as she sits in the antique casement of the rich old room.

The lights through the painted glass

Fall with fondest brightness o'er the form
Of her who sits, the chamber's lovely dame,
And her pale forehead in the light looks warm,
And all these colors round her whiteness flame.

Young is she, scarcely passed from childhood's years,
With grave, soft face, where thoughts and smiles may play,
And unalarmed by guilty aims or fears,
Serene as meadow flowers may meet the day.

No guilty pang she knows, though many a dread
Hangs threatening o'er her in the conscious air,
And 'mid the beams from that bright casement shut,
A twinkling crown foreshows a near despair.

The quaint conciseness of this last line pleases me.
He always speaks in marble words of Greece. But I must
make no more quotations.

Some part of his poem on Shakspeare is no unfit prelude to a
few remarks on his own late work. With such a sense of great-
ness none could wholly fail.

With meaning won from him for ever glows
Each air that England feels, and star it knows ;
And gleams from spheres he first conjoined to earth
Are blent with rays of each new morning's birth,
Amid the sights and tales of common things,
Leaf, flower, and bird, and wars, and deaths of kings,
Of shore, and sea, and nature's daily round
Of life that tills, and tombs that load the ground,
His visions mingle, swell, command, pass by,
And haunt with living presence heart and eye,
And tones from him, by other bosoms caught,
Awaken flush and stir of mounting thought,
And the long sigh, and deep, impassioned thrill,
Rouse custom's trance, and spur the faltering will.
Above the goodly land, more his than ours,
He sits supreme enthroned in skyey towers.
And sees the heroic blood of his creation
Teach larger life to his ennobled nation.
O! shaping brain ! O! flashing fancy's hues !
O! boundless heart kept fresh by pity's dews !
O! wit humane and blythe ! O! sense sublime
For each dim oracle of mantled Time !
Transcendant form of man ! in whom we read,
Mankind's whole tale of Impulse, Thought, and Deed.

Such is his ideal of the great dramatic poet. It would not be
fair to measure him, or any man, by his own ideal ; that affords a
standard of spiritual and intellectual progress, with which the ex-

ecutive powers may not correspond. A clear eye may be associated with a feeble hand, or the reverse. The mode of measurement proposed by the great thinker of our time is not inapplicable. First, show me what aim a man proposes to himself; next, with what degree of earnestness he strives to attain it. In both regards we can look at Mr. Sterling's work with pleasure and admiration. He exhibits to us a great crisis, with noble figures to represent its moving springs. His work is not merely the plea for a principle, or the exposition of a thought, but an exhibition of both at work in life. He opens the instrument and lets us see the machinery without stopping the music. The progress of interest in the piece is imperative, the principal character well brought out, the style clear and energetic, the tone throughout is of a manly dignity, worthy great times. Yet its merit is of a dramatic sketch, rather than a drama. The forms want the roundness, the fulness of life, the thousand charms of spontaneous expression. In this last particular Sterling is as far inferior to Taylor, as Taylor to Shakspeare. His characters, like Miss Baillie's or Talfourd's, narrate rather than express their life. Not elaborately, not pedantically, but yet the effect is that, while they speak we look on them as past, and Sterling's view of them interests us more than themselves. In his view of relations again we must note his inferiority to Taylor, who in this respect is the only contemporary dramatist on whom we can look with complacency. Taylor's characters really meet, really bear upon one another. In contempt and hatred, or esteem, reverence, and melting tenderness, they challenge, bend, and transfuse one another.

Strafford never alters, never is kindled by or kindles the life of any other being, never breathes the breath of the moment. Before us, throughout the play, is the view of his greatness taken by the mind of the author; we are not really made to feel it by those around him; it is echoed from their lips, not from their lives. Lady Carlisle is the only personage, except Strafford, that is

brought out into much relief. Everard is only an accessory, and the king, queen, and parliamentary leaders, drawn with a few strokes to give them their historical position. Scarcely more can be said of Hollis ; some individual action is assigned him, but not so as to individualize his character. The idea of the relation at this ominous period between Strafford and Lady Carlisle is noble. In these stern times he has put behind him the flowers of tenderness, and the toys of passion.

Lady, believe me, that I loved you truly,
Still think of you with wonder and delight,
Own you the liveliest, noblest heart of woman
This age, or any, knows ; but for love ditties
And amorous toys, and kisses ocean-deep,
Strafford and this old Earth are all too sad.

But when the lady had a soul to understand the declaration, and show herself worthy of his friendship, there is a hardness in his action towards her, a want of softness and grace, how different from Van Artevelde's :

My Adriana, victim that thou art.

The nice point indeed, of giving the hero manly firmness, and an even stern self-sufficiency, without robbing him of the beauty of gentle love, was touched with rare success in Van Artevelde. Common men may not be able to show firmness and persistency, without a certain hardness and glassiness of expression ; but we expect of the hero, that he should combine the softness with the constancy of Hector.

This failure is the greater here, that we need a private tie to Strafford to give his fall the deepest tragic interest.

Lady Carlisle is painted with some skill and spirit. The name given her by St. John of "the handsome vixen," and the willingness shown by her little page to die, rather than see her after failing to deliver her letter, joined with her own appearance, mark

her very well. The following is a prose sketch of her as seen in common life.

SIR TOBY MATTHEW's PORTRAIT OF LUCY PERCY, COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

"She is of too high a mind and dignity, not only to seek, but almost to wish the friendship of any creature: they, whom she is pleased to choose, are such as are of the most eminent condition, both for power and employment; not with any design towards her own particular, either of advantage or curiosity, but her nature values fortunate persons as virtuous. She prefers the conversation of men to that of women; not but she can talk on the fashions with her female friends, but she is too soon sensible that she can set them as she wills; that pre-eminence shortens all equality. She converses with those who are most distinguished for their conversational powers.

"Of love freely will she discourse, listen to all its faults, and mark all its power. She cannot herself love in earnest, but she will play with love, and will take a deep interest for persons of condition and celebrity."—See *Life of Pym*; in *Lardner Cabinet Cyclopædia*, Vol. xci., p. 213.

The noblest trait, given her in the play, is the justice she is able to do Charles, after his treachery has consigned Strafford to the Tower.

LADY CARLISLE.

And he betrayed you.

STRAFFORD.

He! it cannot be,

There's not a minion in his court so vile,
Holland nor Jermyn, would deceive a trust
Like that I placed in him, nor would belie
So seeming heart felt words as those he spake.

LADY CARLISLE.

He's not entirely vile, and yet he did it.

This, seen in unison with her outpouring of contempt upon the king when present, makes out a character. As a whole, that given her by the poet is not only nobler than the one assigned her in history, but opposed to it in a vital point.

The play closes after Strafford has set forth for the scaffold

with the ejaculation from her left in the Tower, where she has waited on his last moments,

"Alone, henceforth forever!"

While history makes her transfer her attachment to Pym, who must have been, in her eyes, Strafford's murderer, on the score of her love of intellectual power, in which all other considerations were merged. This is a character so odious, and in a woman, so unnatural, that we are tempted rather to suppose it was hatred of the king for his base and treacherous conduct towards Strafford, that induced her to betray to Pym the counsels of the court, as the best means of revenge. Such a version of her motives would not be inconsistent with the character assigned her in the play. It would be making her the agent to execute her own curse, so eloquently spoken after she finds the king willing to save himself by the sacrifice of Strafford's life.

KING CHARLES.

The woman's mad; her passion braves the skies!

LADY CARLISLE.

I brave them not; I but invoke their justice
To rain hot curses on a tyrant's head;
Henceforth I set myself apart for mischief,
To find and prompt men capable of hate,
Until some dagger, steeled in Strafford's blood,
Knocks at the heart of Strafford's murderer.

KING CHARLES.

His murderer! O God!—no, no,—not that!

(*Sinks back into a seat.*)

LADY CARLISLE.

And here I call on all the powers above us
To aid the deep damnation of my curse,
And make this treason to the noblest man,
That moves alive within our English seas,
Fatal to him and all his race, whose baseness
Destroys a worth it ne'er could understand.
Stars in your glory, vital air and sun,

And thou, dark earth, our cradle, nurse, and grave,
And more than all, free truth and penal justice,
Conspire with all your dreadful influence
Against his blood, whose crime ye now behold !
Make him a byeword, and a name of woe,
A conquered warrior, and a throneless outcast,
To teach all kings the law of evil power,
Till by an end more friendless and abhorred
Than his great victim's, and with heavier pain,
Let him slink off to a detested grave !
And now I give your majesty leave to go,
And may you carry from my house away,
That fixed incurable ulcer of the heart,
Which I have helped your thoughts to fasten there.

If these burning words had as much power to kindle her own heart, as they must that of the hearer, we only realize our anticipations, when we find her sending to the five members the news of the intention of Charles to arrest them, thus placing him in a position equally ridiculous and miserable, having incurred all the odium of this violent transaction to no purpose. That might well be a proud moment of gratified vengeance to her, when he stood amid the sullen and outraged parliament, baffled like a schoolboy, loathed as a thief, exclaiming, "The birds are flown," and all owing to "the advices of the honorable Lady Carlisle."

The play opens with Strafford's return to London. He is made to return in rather a different temper from what he really did, not only trusting the king, but in his own greatness fearless of the popular hatred. The opening scenes are very good, compact, well wrought, and showing at the very beginning the probable fortunes of the scene, by making the characters the agents of their own destinies. A weight of tragedy is laid upon the heart, and at the same time we are inspired with deep interest as to *how* it shall be acted out.

Strafford appears before us as he does in history, a grand and melancholy figure, whose dignity lay in his energy of will, and

large scope of action, not in his perception of principles, or virtue in carrying them out. For his faith in the need of absolute sway to control the herd, does not merit the name of a principle.

In my thought, the promise of success
Grows to the self-same stature as the need,
Which is gigantic. There's a king to guide,
Three realms to save, a nation to control,
And by subduing to make blest beyond
Their sottish dreams of lawless liberty.
This to fulfil Strafford has pledged his soul
In the unfaltering hands of destiny.

Nor can we fail to believe, that the man of the world might sincerely take this view of his opponents.

No wonder they whose life is all deception,
A piety that, like a sheep-skin drum,
Is loud because 'tis hollow,—thus can move
Belief in others by their swollen pretences.
Why, man, it is their trade; they do not stick
To cozen themselves, and will they stop at you?

The court and council scenes are good. The materials are taken from history, with Shakspearean adherence to the record, but they are uttered in masculine cadences, sinewy English, worthy this great era in the life of England.

The king and queen and sycophants of the court are too carelessly drawn. Such unmitigated baseness and folly, are unbearable in poetry. The master invests his worst characters with redeeming traits, or at least, touches them with a human interest, that prevents their being objects of disgust rather than contempt or aversion. This is the poetic gift, to penetrate to the truth below the fact. We need to hear the excuses men make to themselves for their worthlessness.

The council of the parliamentary leaders is far better. Here the author speaks his natural language from the lips of grave enthusiastic men. Pym's advice to his daughter is finely worded,

and contains truths, which, although they have been so often expressed, are not like to find so large reception, as to dispense with new and manifold utterance.

The Lord has power
To guard his own : pray, Mary, pray to Him,
Nor fear what man can do. A rule there is
Above all circumstance, a current deep
Beneath all fluctuations. This who knows,
Though seeming weakest, firmly as the sun
Walks in blind paths where earthly strongest fall,
Reason is God's own voice to man, ordains
All holy duties, and all truth inspires :
And he who fails, errs not by trusting it,
But deafening to the sound his ear, from dread
Of the stern roar it speaks with. O, my child,
Pray still for guidance, and be sure 'twill come.
Lift up your heart upon the knees of God ;
Losing yourself, your smallness, and your darkness,
In his great light, who fills and moves the world,
Who hath alone the quiet of perfect motion—
Sole quiet, not mere death.

The speech of Vane is nobly rendered.

The conversations of the populace are tolerably well done. Only the greatest succeed in these ; nobody except Goethe in modern times. Here they give, not the character of the people, but the spirit of the time, playing in relation to the main action the part of chorus.

SECOND WOMAN.

There's Master St. John has a tongue
That threshes like a flail.

THIRD WOMAN.

And Master Fiennes
That's a true lamb ! He'd roast alive the Bishop.

CITIZEN.

I was close by the coach, and with my nose

Upon the door, I called out, Down with Strafford!
 And then just so he fixed his eyes on mine,
 And something seemed to choke me in the throat;
 In truth, I think it must have been the devil!

THIRD CITIZEN.

I saw him as he stepped out of the House,
 And then his face was dark, but very quiet;
 It seemed like looking down the dusky mouth
 Of a great cannon. —

Everard says with expressive bitterness as they shout "Down with Strafford,"

I've heard this noise so often, that it seems
 As natural as the howling of the wind.

And again-

For forty years I've studied books and men,
 But ne'er till these last days have known a jot
 Of the true secret madness in mankind!
 This morn the whispers leapt from each to each,
 Like a petard alight, which every man
 Feared might explode in his own hands, and therefore
 Would haste to pass it onward to his friend.

Even in our piping times of peace, nullification and the Rhode Island difficulties have given us specimens of the process of fermentation, the more than Virgilian growth of Rumor.

The description of the fanatic preacher by Everard is very good. The poor secretary, not placed in the prominent rank to suffer, yet feeling all that passes, through his master, finds vent to his grief, not in mourning, but a strong causticity :

The sad fanatic preacher,
 In whom one saw, by glancing through the eyes,
 The last grey curdling dregs of human joy,
 Dropped sudden sparks that kindled where they fell.

Strafford draws the line between his own religion and that of

the puritans, as it seemed to him, with noble phrase in his last advices to his son.

Say it has ever been his father's mind,
 That perfect reason, justice, government,
 Are the chief attributes of Him who made,
 And who sustains the world, in whose full being,
 Wisdom and power are one; and I, his creature,
 Would fain have gained authority and rule,
 To make the imagined order in my soul
 Supreme o'er all, the proper good of man.
 But Him to love who shaped us, and whose breast
 Is the one home of all things, with a passion
 Electing Him amid all other beings,
 As if he were beside them, not their all,
 This is the snug and dozing delirion
 Of men, who filch from woman what is worst,
 And cannot see the good. Of such beware.

This is the nobler tone of Strafford's spirit.* That more habitual to him is heard in his presumptuous joy before entering the parliament, into which he went as a conqueror, and came out a prisoner. His confidence is not noble to us, it is not that of Brutus or Van Artevelde, who, knowing what is prescribed by the law of right within the breast, can take no other course but that, whatever the consequences; neither like the faith of Julius Cæsar or Wallenstein in their star, which, though less pure, is not without religion; but it is the presumption of a strong character

* His late biographer says well in regard to the magnanimity of his later days, of so much nobler a tone than his general character would lead us to expect. "It is a mean as well as a hasty judgment, which would attribute this to any unworthy compromise with his real nature. It is probably a juster and more profound view of it, to say that, into a few of the later weeks of his life, new knowledge had penetrated from the midst of the breaking of his fortunes. It was well and beautifully said by a then living poet,

'The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
 Lets in new light through chinks that time has made.'"

Foster's Life of Strafford, Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia.

which, though its head towers above those of its companions when they are on the same level, yet has not taken a sufficiently high platform, to see what passes around or above it. Strafford's strength cannot redeem his infatuation, while he struggles; vanquished, not overwhelmed, he is a majestic figure, whose features* are well marked in various passages.

Compared with him, whom I for eighteen years
Have seen familiar as my friend, all men
Seem but as chance-born flies, and only he
Great Nature's chosen and all-gifted son

†Van Artevelde also bears testimony to the belief of the author, that familiarity breeds no contempt, but the reverse in the service of genuine nobility. A familiarity of eighteen years will not make any but a stage hero, other than a hero to his *valet de chambre*.

King Charles says,

To pass the bill,—
Under his eye, with that fixed quiet look
Of imperturbable and thoughtful greatness,
I cannot do it.

Strafford himself says, on the final certainty of the king's desertion,

Dear Everard, peace! for there is nothing here
I have not weighed before, and made my own.

* "A poet, who was present, exclaimed;

On thy brow
Sate terror mixed with wisdom, and at once
Saturn and Hermes in thy countenance."

Life of Strafford, p. 338.

Certainly there could not be a more pointed and pregnant account given of the man than is suggested by this last line.

† That with familiarity respect
Doth slacken, is a word of common use;
I never found it so.

Philip Van Artevelde, 2d Part, p. 29.

And this, no doubt, was true, in a sense. Historians, finding that Strafford expressed surprise, and even indignation, that the king had complied with Strafford's own letter releasing him from all obligation to save his life, have intimated that the letter was written out of policy. But this is a superficial view ; it produces very different results from giving up all to another to see him take it ; and, though Strafford must have known Charles's weakness too well to expect any thing good from him, yet the consummation must have produced fresh emotion, for a strong character cannot be prepared for the conduct of a weak one ; there is always in dishonour somewhat unexpected and incredible to one incapable of it.

The speeches in parliament are well translated from the page of history. The poet, we think, has improved upon it in Strafford's mention of his children ; it has not the theatrical tone of the common narrative, and is, probably, nearer truth, as it is more consistent with the rest of his deportment.

He has made good use of the fine anecdote of the effect produced on Pym by meeting Strafford's eye at the close of one of his most soaring passages.

PYM.

The King is King, but as he props the State,
 The State a legal and compacted bond,
 Tying us all in sweet fraternity,
 And that loosed off by fraudulent creeping hand,
 Or cut and torn by lawless violence,
 There is no King because the State is gone ;
 And in the cannibal chaos that remains
 Each man is sovereign of himself alone.
 Shall then a drunken regicidal blow
 Be paid by forfeit of the driveller's head,
 And he go free, who, slaying Law itself,
 Murders all royalty and all subjection ?
 He who, with all the radiant attributes
 That most, save goodness, can adorn a man,

Would turn his kind to planless brutishness.

His knavery soars, indeed, and strikes the stars,
Yet is worse knavery than the meanest felon's.

(*Strafford fixes his eyes on Pym, who hesitates.*)

Oh! no, my Lords, Oh! no,

(*Aside to Hampden.*) His eye confounds me; he* was once my friend.

(*Aloud.*) Oh! no, my Lords, the very self-same rule, &c.

The eloquence of this period could not be improved upon; but it is much to select from and use its ebullitions with the fine effect we admire in this play. Whatever view be taken of Strafford, whether as condemnatory as the majority of writers popular among us, the descendants of the puritans, would promote, or that more lenient and discriminating, brought out in this play, for which abundant grounds may be discovered by those who will seek, we cannot view him at this period but with the interest of tragedy as of one suffering unjustly. For however noble the eloquence of the parliamentary leaders in appealing to a law above *the* law, to an eternal justice in the breast, which afforded sufficient sanction to the desired measure, it cannot but be seen, at this distance of time, that this reigned not purely in their own breasts, that his doom, though sought by them from patriotic, not interested, motives, was, in itself, a measure of expediency. He was *the* victim, because the most dreaded foe, because they could not go on with confidence, while the only man lived, who could and would sustain Charles in his absurd and wicked policy. Thus, though

* Through the whole of the speech Strafford is described to have been closely and earnestly watching Pym, when the latter suddenly turning, met the fixed and faded eyes and haggard features of his early associate, and a rush of feelings from other days, so fearfully contrasting the youth and friendship of the past with the love-poisoned hate of the present, and the mortal agony impending in the future, for a moment deprived the patriot of self-possession. "His papers he looked on," says Baillie, "but they could not help him, so he behooved to pass them." For a moment only; suddenly recovering his dignity and self-command, he told the court, &c.—*Life of Pym, Cabinet Cyclopædia.*

he might deserve that the people on whom he trampled should rise up to crush him, that the laws he had broken down should rear new and higher walls to imprison him, though the shade of Eliot called for vengeance on the counsellor who alone had so long saved the tyrant from a speedier fall, and the victims of his own oppressions echoed with sullen murmur to the “silver trumpet” call,* *yet* the greater the peculiar offences of this man, the more need that his punishment should have been awarded in an absolutely pure spirit. And this it was not ; it may be respected as an act of just retribution, but not of pure justice.

Men who had such a cause to maintain, as his accusers had, should deserve the praise awarded by Wordsworth to him who,

In a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
Yet fixes good on good alone, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows.

The heart swells against Strafford as we read the details of his policy. Even allowing that his native temper, prejudices of birth, and disbelief in mankind, really inclined him to a despotic government, as the bad best practicable, that his early espousal of the popular side was only a stratagem to terrify the court, and that he was thus, though a deceiver, no apostate, yet, he *had* been led, from whatever motives, to look on that side ; his great intellect was clear of sight, the front presented by better principles in that time commanding. We feel that he was wilful in the course he took, and self-aggrandizement his principal, if not his only motive. We share the hatred of his time, as we see him so triumphant in his forceful, wrongful measures. But we would not have had him hunted down with such a hue and cry,

* “I will not repeat, Sirs, what you have heard from that silver trumpet.” One of the parliament speaking of Rudyard.

that the tones of defence had really no chance to be heard. We would not have had papers stolen, and by a son from a father who had entrusted him with a key, to condemn him. And what a man was this thief, one whose high enthusiastic hope never paused at good, but ever rushed onward to the best.

Who would outbid the market of the world,
And seek a holier than a common prize,
And by the unworthy lever of to-day
Ope the strange portals of a better morn.

* * * * *

Begin to-day, nor end till evil sink
In its due grave; and if at once we may not
Declare the greatness of the work we plan,
Be sure, at least, that ever in our eyes
It stand complete before us, as a dome
Of light beyond this gloom; a house of stars,
Encompassing these dusky tents; a thing
Absolute, close to all, though seldom seen,
Near as our hearts, and perfect as the heavens.
Be this our aim and model, and our hands
Shall not wax faint until the work is done.

He is not the first, who, by looking too much at the stars has lost the eye for severe fidelity to a private trust. He thought himself "obliged in conscience to impart the paper to Master Pym." Who that looks at the case by the code of common rectitude can think it was ever his to impart?

What monstrous measures appear the arbitrary construction put on the one word in the minutes which decided the fate of Strafford, the freeing the lords of council from the oath of secrecy under whose protection he had spoken there, the conduct of the House towards Lord Digby, when he declared himself not satisfied that the prisoner could with justice be declared guilty of treason; the burning his speech by the common hangman when he dared print it, to make known the reasons of his course to the world, when placarded as Straffordian, held up as a mark for

popular rage for speaking it.* Lord Digby was not a man of honour, but they did not know that, or if they did, it had nothing to do with his right of private judgment. What could Strafford, what could Charles do more high-handed ? If they had violated the privileges of parliament, the more reason parliament should respect their privileges, above all the privilege of the prisoner, to be supposed innocent until proved guilty. The accusers, obliged to set aside rule, and appeal to the very foundations of equity, could only have sanctioned such a course by the religion and pure justice of their proceedings. Here the interest of the accusers made them not only demand, but insist upon, the condemnation ; the cause was prejudged by the sentiment of the people, and the resentments of the jury, and the proceedings conducted, beside, with the most scandalous disregard to the sickness and other disadvantageous circumstances of Strafford. He was called on to answer "if he will come," just at the time of a most dangerous attack from his cruel distemper ; if he *will not come*, the cause is still to be pushed forward. He was denied the time and means he needed to collect his evidence. The aid to be given him by counsel, after being deprived of his chief witness "by a master stroke of policy," was restricted within narrow limits. While he prepared his answers, in full court, for he was never allowed to retire, to the points of accusation, vital in their import, requiring the closest examination, those present talked, laughed, ate, lounged about. None of this disturbed his magnanimous patience ; his conduct indeed is so noble, through the whole period, that he and his opponents change places in our minds ; at the time, he seems the princely deer, and they the savage hounds.†

* See Parliamentary History, volume ix.

† Who can avoid a profound feeling, not only of compassion, but sympathy, when he reads of Strafford obliged to kneel in Westminster Hall. True, he would, if possible, have brought others as low ; but there is a deep pathos in the contrast of his then, and his former state, best shown by the symbol of such an

Well, it is all the better for the tragedy, but as we read the sublime appeals of Pym to a higher state of being, we cannot but wish that all had been done in accordance with them. The art and zeal, with which the condemnation of Strafford was obtained, have had high praise as statesmanlike ; we would have wished for them one so high as to preclude this.

No doubt great temporary good was effected for England by the death of Strafford, but the permanence of good is ever in proportion with the purity of the means used to obtain it. This act would have been great for Strafford, for it was altogether in accordance with his views. He met the parliament ready to do battle to the death, and might would have been right, had *he* made rules for the lists ; but *they* proposed a different rule for their government, and by that we must judge them. Admit the story of Vane's pilfering the papers not to be true, that the minutes were obtained some other way. This measure, on the supposition of its existence, is defended by those who defend the rest.

Strafford would certainly have come off with imprisonment and degradation from office, had the parliament deemed it safe to leave him alive. When we consider this, when we remember the threat of Pym, at the time of his deserting the popular party, " You have left us, but I will never leave you while your head is on your shoulders," we see not, setting aside the great results of the act, and looking at it by its merits alone, that it differs from the administration of Lynch law in some regions of our own country.

act. Just so we read of Bonaparte's green coat being turned at St. Helena, after it had faded on the right side. He who had overturned the world, to end with having his old coat turned ! There is something affecting, Belisarius-like in the picture. When Warren Hastings knelt in Westminster Hall, the chattering but pleasant Miss Burney tells us, Wyndham, for a moment struck, half shrunk from the business of prosecuting him. At such a sight, whispers in every breast the monition, Had I been similarly tempted, had I not fallen as low, or lower ?

Lynch law, with us, has often punished the gamester and the robber, whom it was impossible to convict by the usual legal process ; the evil in it is, that it cannot be depended upon, but, while with one hand it punishes a villain, administers with the other as summary judgment on the philanthropist, according as the moral sentiment or prejudice may be roused in the popular breast.

We have spoken disparagingly of the capacities of the drama for representing what is peculiar in our own day, but, for such a work as this, presenting a great crisis with so much clearness, force, and varied beauty, we can only be grateful, and ask for more acquaintance with the same mind, whether through the drama or in any other mode.

Copious extracts have been given, in the belief that thus, better than by any interpretation or praise of ours, attention would be attracted, and a wider perusal ensured to Mr. Sterling's works.

In his mind there is a combination of reverence for the Ideal, with a patient appreciation of its slow workings in the actual world, that is rare in our time. He looks religiously, he speaks philosophically, nor these alone, but with that other faculty which he himself so well describes.

You bear a brain
Discursive, open, generally wise,
But missing ever that excepted point
That gives each thing and hour a special oneness.
The little key-hole of the infrangible door,
The instant on which hangs eternity,
And not in the dim past and empty future,
Waste fields for abstract notions.

Such is the demonology of the man of the world. It may rule in accordance with the law of right, but where it does not, the strongest man may lose the battle, and so it was with Strafford.

DIALOGUE

CONTAINING SUNDRY GLOSSES ON POETIC TEXTS.

SCENE is in a chamber, in the upper story of a city boarding house. The room is small, but neat and furnished with some taste. There are books, a few flowers, even a chamber organ. On the wall hangs a fine engraving from one of Dominichino's pictures. The curtain is drawn up, and shows the moonlight falling on the roofs and chimnies of the city and the distant water, on whose bridges threads of light burn dully.

To Aglauron enter Laurie. A kindly greeting having been interchanged,

Laurie. It is a late hour, I confess, for a visit, but coming home I happened to see the light from your window, and the remembrance of our pleasant evenings here in other days came so strongly over me, that I could not help trying the door.

Aglauron. I do not now see you here so often, that I could afford to reject your visits at any hour.

L. (Seating himself, looks round for a moment with an expression of some sadness.) All here looks the same, your fire burns bright, the moonlight I see you like to have come in as formerly, and we,—we are not changed, Aglauron?

A. I am not.

L. Not towards me?

A. You have elected other associates, as better pleasing or more useful to you than I. Our intercourse no longer ministers to my thoughts, to my hopes. To think of you with that habitual affection, with that lively interest I once did, would be as if the mutilated soldier should fix his eyes constantly on the empty

sleeve of his coat. My right hand being taken from me, I use my left.

L. You speak coldly, Aglauron ; you cannot doubt that my friendship for you is the same as ever.

A. You should not reproach me for speaking coldly. You have driven me to subdue my feelings by reason, and the tone of reason seems cold because it is calm.

You say your friendship is the same. Your thoughts of your friend are the same, your feelings towards him are not. Your feelings flow now in other channels.

L. Am I to blame for that ?

A. Surely not. No one is to blame ; if either were so, it would be I, for not possessing more varied powers to satisfy the variations and expansions of your nature.

L. But have I not seemed heartless to you at times ?

A. In the moment, perhaps, but quiet thought always showed me the difference between heartlessness and the want of a deep heart.

Nor do I think this will eventually be denied you. You are generous, you love truth. Time will make you less restless, because less bent upon yourself, will give depth and steadfastness to that glowing heart. Tenderness will then come of itself. You will take upon you the bonds of friendship less easily and knit them firmer.

L. And you will then receive me ?

A. I or some other ; it matters not.

L. Ah ! you have become indifferent to me.

A. What would you have ? That gentle trust, which seems to itself immortal, cannot be given twice. What is sweet and flower-like in the mind is very timid, and can only be tempted out by the wooing breeze and infinite promise of spring. Those flowers, once touched by a cold wind, will not revive again.

L. But their germs lie in the earth.

A. Yes, to await a new spring ! But this conversation is profitless. Words can neither conceal nor make up for the want of flowing love. I do not blame you, Laurie, but I cannot afford to love you as I have done any more, nor would it avail either of us, if I could. Seek elsewhere what you can no longer duly prize from me. Let us not seek to raise the dead from their tombs, but cherish rather the innocent children of to-day.

L. But I cannot be happy unless there is a perfectly good understanding between us.

A. That, indeed, we ought to have. I feel the power of understanding your course, whether it bend my way or not. I need not communication from you, or personal relation to do that,

"Have I the human kernel first examined,
Then I know, too, the future will and action."

I have known you too deeply to misjudge you, in the long run.

L. Yet you have been tempted to think me heartless.

A. For the moment only ; have I not said it ? Thought always convinced me that I could not have been so shallow as to barter heart for anything but heart. I only, by the bold play natural to me, led you to stake too high for your present income. I do not demand the forfeit on the friendly game. Do you understand me ?

L. No, I do not understand being both friendly and cold.

A. Thou wilt, when thou shalt have lent as well as borrowed.

I can bring forward on this subject gospel independent of our own experience. The poets, as usual, have thought out the subject for their age. And it is an age where the complex and subtle workings of its spirit make it not easy for the immortal band, the sacred band of equal friends, to be formed into phalanx, or march with equal step in any form.

Soon after I had begun to read some lines of our horoscope, I found this poem in Wordsworth, which seemed to link into meaning many sounds that were vibrating round me.

A COMPLAINT.

There is a change, and I am poor;
 Your Love hath been, nor long ago,
 A Fountain at my fond Heart's door,
 Whose only business was to flow;
 And flow it did; not taking heed
 Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count,
 Blest was I then all bliss above;
 Now, for this consecrated Fount
 Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
 What have I? shall I dare to tell?
 A comfortless and hidden WELL.

A Well of love, it may be deep,
 I trust it is, and never dry;
 What matter? if the Waters sleep
 In silence and obscurity,
 Such change, and at the very door
 Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

This, at the time, seemed unanswerable; yet, afterwards I found among the writings of Coleridge what may serve as a sufficient answer.

A SOLILOQUY.

Unchanged within to see all changed without
 Is a blank lot and hard to bear, no doubt.

Yet why at other's wanings shouldst thou fret?
 Then only might'st thou feel a just regret,

Hadst thou withheld thy love, or hid thy light
 In selfish forethought of neglect and slight,

O wiselier, then, from feeble yearnings freed,
 While, and on whom, thou mayst, shine on! nor heed

Whether the object by reflected light
 Return thy radiance or absorb it quite;

And though thou notest from thy safe recess
Old Friends burn dim, like lamps in noisome air,
Love them for what they *are*; nor love them less,
Because to *thee* they are not what they *were*.

L. Do you expect to be able permanently to abide by such solace ?

A. I do not expect so Olympian a calmness, that ~~at~~ first, when the chain of intercourse is broken, when confidence is dismayed, and thought driven back upon its source, I shall not feel a transient pang, even a shame, as when

“ The sacred secret hath flown out of us,
And the heart been broken open by deep care.”

The wave receding, leaves the strand for the moment forlorn, and weed-bestrown.

L. And is there no help for this ? Is there not a pride, a prudence, identical with self-respect, that could preserve us from such mistakes ?

A. If you can show me one that is not selfish forethought of neglect or slight, I would wear it and recommend it as the desired amulet. As yet, I know no pride, no prudence except love of truth.

Would a prudence be desirable that should have hindered our intimacy ?

L. Ah, no ! it was happy, it was rich.

A. Very well then, let us drink the bitter with as good a grace as the sweet, and for to-night talk no more of ourselves.

L. To talk then of those other, better selves, the poets. I can well understand that Coleridge should have drunk so deeply as he did of this bitter-sweet. His nature was ardent, intense, variable in its workings, one of tides, crises, fermentations. He was the flint from which the spark must be struck by violent collision. His life was a mass in the midst of which fire glowed, but needed time to transfuse it, as his heavenly eyes glowed

amid such heavy features. The habit of taking opium was but an outward expression of the transports and depressions to which he was inly prone. In him glided up in the silence, equally vivid, the Christabel, the Geraldine. Through his various mind

"Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man,
Down to a sunless sea."

He was one of those with whom

"The meteor offspring of the brain
Unnourished wane,
Faith asks her daily bread,
And fancy must be fed."

And when this was denied,

"Came a restless state, 'twixt yea and nay,
His faith was fixed, his heart all ebb and flow;
Or like a bark, in some half-sheltered bay,
Above its anchor driving to and fro."

Thus we cannot wonder that he, with all his vast mental resources and noble aims, should have been the bard elect to sing of Dejection, and that the pages of his prose works should be blistered by more painful records of and social experiences, than we find in almost any mind able to invoke the aid of divine philosophy, a mind touched by humble piety. But Wordsworth, who so early knew, and sought, and found the life and the work he wanted, whose wide and equable thought flows on like a river through the plain, whose verse seemed to come daily like the dew to rest upon the flowers of home affections, we should think he might always have been with his friend, as he describes two who had grown up together,

"Each other's advocate, each other's stay,
And strangers to content, if long apart,
Or more divided than a sportive pair

Of sea-fowl, conscious both that they are hovering
 Within the eddy of a common blast,
 Or hidden only by the concave depth
 Of neighbouring billows from each other's sight."

And that we should not find in him traces of the sort of wound,
 nor the tone of deep human melancholy that we find in this Com-
 plaint, and in the sonnet, "Why art thou silent."

A. I do not remember that.

L. It is in the last published volume of his poems, though
 probably written many years before.

"Why art thou silent? Is thy love a plant
 Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
 Of absence withers what was once so fair?
 Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
 Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant,
 (As would my deeds have been) with hourly care,
 The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
 For naught but what thy happiness could spare.
 Speak, though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
 A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
 Be left more desolate, more dreary cold,
 Than a forsaken bird's nest filled with snow,
 Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine;
 Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know."

A. That is indeed the most pathetic description of the speech-
 less palsy that precedes the death of love.

"Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?"

But Laurie, how could you ever fancy a mind of poetic sensi-
 bility would be a stranger to this sort of sadness?

What signifies the security of a man's own position and
 choice? The peace and brightness of his own lot? If he has
 this intelligent sensibility can he fail to perceive the throb that
 agitates the bosom of all nature, or can his own fail to respond
 to it?

In the eye of man, or in the sunset clouds, from the sobs of literature, or those of the half-spent tempest, can he fail to read the secrets of fate and time, of an over-credulous hope, a too much bewailed disappointment? Will not a very slight hint convey to the mind in which the nobler faculties are at all developed, a sense of the earthquakes which may in a moment upheave his vineyard and whelm his cottage beneath rivers of fire. Can the poet at any time, like the stupid rich man, say to his soul, " Eat, drink, and be merry." No, he must ever say to his fellow man, as Menelaus to his kingly brother,

" Shall my affairs
Go pleasantly, while thine are full of woe?"

Oh, never could Wordsworth fail, beside his peaceful lake, to know the tempests of the ocean. And to an equable temperament sorrow seems sadder than it really is, for such know less of the pleasures of resistance.

It needs not that one of deeply thoughtful mind be passionate, to divine all the secrets of passion. Thought is a bee that cannot miss those flowers.

Think you that if Hamlet had held exactly the position best fitted to his nature, had his thoughts become acts, without any violent willing of his own, had a great people paid life-long homage to his design, had he never detected the baseness of his mother, nor found cause to suspect the untimely fate of his father, had that " rose of May, the sweet Ophelia," bloomed safely at his side, and Horatio always been near, with his understanding mind and spotless hands, do you think all this could have preserved Hamlet from the astounding discovery that

" A man may smile, and smile, and be a villain?"

That line, once written on his tables, would have required the commentary of many years for its explanation.

L. He was one by nature adapted to "consider too curiously," for his own peace.

A. All thoughtful minds are so.

L. All geniuses have not been sad.

A. So far as they are artistic, merely, they differ not from instinctive, practical characters, they find relief in work. But so far as they tend to evolve thought, rather than to recreate the forms of things, they suffer again and again the pain of death, because they open the gate to the next, the higher realm of being. Shakspere knew both, the joy of creation, the deep pang of knowledge, and this last he has expressed in Hamlet with a force that vibrates almost to the centre of things.

L. It is marvellous, indeed, to hear the beautiful young prince catalogue—

"The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to, * * * *
 * * The whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despised love, * * *
 * * * * The spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes."

To thee, Hamlet, so complete a nature,

"The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
 The noble and most sovereign reason,
 The unmatched form and feature ~~of~~ blown youth,"

could such things come so near? Who then shall hope a refuge, except through inborn stupidity or perfected faith?

A. Ay, well might he call his head a globe! It was fitted to comprehend all that makes up that "quintessence of dust, how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties; in form, and moving, how express and admirable; in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god; the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!" yet to him, only a quintessence of dust!

L. And this world only "a sterile promontory."

A. Strange, that when from it one can look abroad into the ocean, its barrenness should be so depressing. But man seems to need some shelter, both from wind and rain.

L. Could he not have found this in the love of Ophelia?

A. Probably not, since that love had so little power to disenchant the gloom of this period. She was to him a flower to wear in his bosom, a child to play the lute at his feet. We see the charm of her innocence, her soft credulity, as she answers her brother,

“No more, but so?”

The exquisite grace of her whole being in the two lines

“And I of ladies most deject and wretched
That sucked the honey of his music vows.”

She cannot be made to misunderstand him; his rude wildness crushes, but cannot deceive her heart. She has no answer to his outbreaks but

“O help him, you sweet Heavens!”

But, lovely as she was, and loved by him, this love could have been only the ornament, not, in any wise, the food of his life. The moment he is left alone, his thoughts revert to universal topics; it was the constitution of his mind, no personal relation could have availed it, except in the way of suggestion. He could not have been absorbed in the present moment. Still it would have been

“Heaven and earth!
Must I remember?”

L. Have you been reading the play of late?

A. Yes; hearing Macready, one or two points struck me that have not before, and I was inclined to try for my thousandth harvest from a new study of it.

Macready gave its just emphasis to the climax—

“ I 'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane,”

so unlike in its order to what would have been in any other mind, as also to the two expressions in the speech so delicately characteristic,

“ The glimpses of the moon.”

and

“ With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls.”

I think I have in myself improved, that I feel more than ever what Macready does not, the deep calmness, always apparent beneath the delicate variations of this soul's atmosphere.

“ The readiness is all.”

This religion from the very first harmonizes all these thrilling notes, and the sweet bells, even when most jangled out of tune, suggest all their silenced melody.

From Hamlet I turned to Timon and Lear ; the transition was natural yet surprising, from the indifference and sadness of the heaven-craving soul to the misanthropy of the disappointed affections and wounded trust. Hamlet would well have understood them both, yet what a firmament of spheres lies between his “ pangs of despised love,” and the anguish of Lear.

“ O Rei , Goneril !

Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave you all—
O that way madness lies, let me shun that,
No more of that,

* * * * *

“ I tax you not, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, called you children.”

* * * * *

It rends the heart only ; no grief would be possible from a Hamlet, which would not, at the same time, exalt the soul.

The outraged heart of Timon takes refuge at once in action, in curses, and bitter deeds. It needs to be relieved by the native

baseness of Apemantus's misanthropy, baseness of a soul that never knew how to trust, to make it dignified in our eyes. Timon, estranged from men, could only die ; yet the least shade of wrong in this heaven-ruled world would have occasioned Hamlet a deeper pain than Timon was capable of divining. Yet Hamlet could not for a moment have been so deceived as to fancy man worthless, because many men were ; he knew *himself* too well, to feel the surprise of Timon when his steward proved true.

" Let me behold
 Thy face.—Surely this man was born of woman.—
 Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,
 You perpetual-sober gods ! I do proclaim
 One honest man."

He does not deserve a friend that could draw higher inferences from his story than the steward does.

" Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,
 Undone by goodness ! Strange, unusual blood,
 When man's worst sin is, he does too much good !
 Who then dares to be half so kind again ?
 For bounty that makes gods, doth still mar men."

Timon tastes the dregs of the cup. He persuades himself that he does not believe even in himself.

" His semblable, even himself, Timon disdains."

* * * * *

" Who dares, who dares
 In purity of manhood to stand up
 And say *this man's a flatterer*, if one be
 So are they all."

L. You seem to have fixed your mind, of late, on the subject of misanthropy !

A. I own that my thoughts *have* turned of late on that low form which despair assumes sometimes even with the well disposed. Yet see how inexcusable would it be in any of these beings. Hamlet is no misanthrope, but he has those excelling gifts,

least likely to find due response from those around him. Yet he is felt, almost in his due sense, by two or three.

Lear has not only one faithful daughter, whom he knew not how to value, but a friend beside.

Timon is prized by the only persons to whom he was good, purely from kindness of nature, rather than the joy he expected from their gratitude and sympathy, his servants.

Tragedy is always a mistake, and the loneliness of the deepest thinker, the widest lover, ceases to be pathetic to us, so soon as the sun is high enough above the mountains.

Were I, despite the bright points so numerous in their history and the admonitions of my own conscience, inclined to despise my fellow men, I should have found abundant argument against it during this late study of Hamlet. In the streets, saloons, and lecture rooms, we continually hear comments so stupid, insolent, and shallow on great and beautiful works, that we are tempted to think that there is no Public for anything that is good ; that a work of genius can appeal only to the fewest minds in any one age, and that the reputation now awarded to those of former times is never felt, but only traditional. Of Shakspeare, so vaunted a name, little wise or worthy has been written, perhaps nothing so adequate as Coleridge's comparison of him to the Pine-apple ; yet on reading Hamlet, his greatest work, we find there is not a pregnant sentence, scarce a word that men have not appreciated, have not used in myriad ways. Had we never read the play, we should find the whole of it from quotation and illustration familiar to us as air. That exquisite phraseology, so heavy with meaning, wrought out with such admirable minuteness, has become a part of literary diction, the stock of the literary bank ; and what set criticism can tell like this fact how great was the work, and that men were worthy it should be addressed to them ?

L. The moon looks in to tell her assent. See, she has just

got above that chimney. Just as this happy certainty has with you risen above the disgusts of the day.

A. She looks surprised as well as complacent.

L. She looks surprised to find me still here. I must say good night. My friend, good night.

A. Good night, and farewell.

L. You look as if it were for some time.

A. That rests with you. You will generally find me here, and always I think like-minded, if not of the same mind.

An ancient sage had all things deeply tried,
And, as result, thus to his friends he cried,
"O friends, there are no friends." And to this day
Thus twofold moves the strange magnetic sway,
Giving us love which love must take away.
Let not the soul for this distrust its right,
Knowing when changeful moons withdraw their light,
Then myriad stars, with promise not less pure,
New loves, new lives to patient hopes assure,
So long as laws that rule the spheres endure.

